

NINETY FIFTH INFANTRY DIVISION HISTORY



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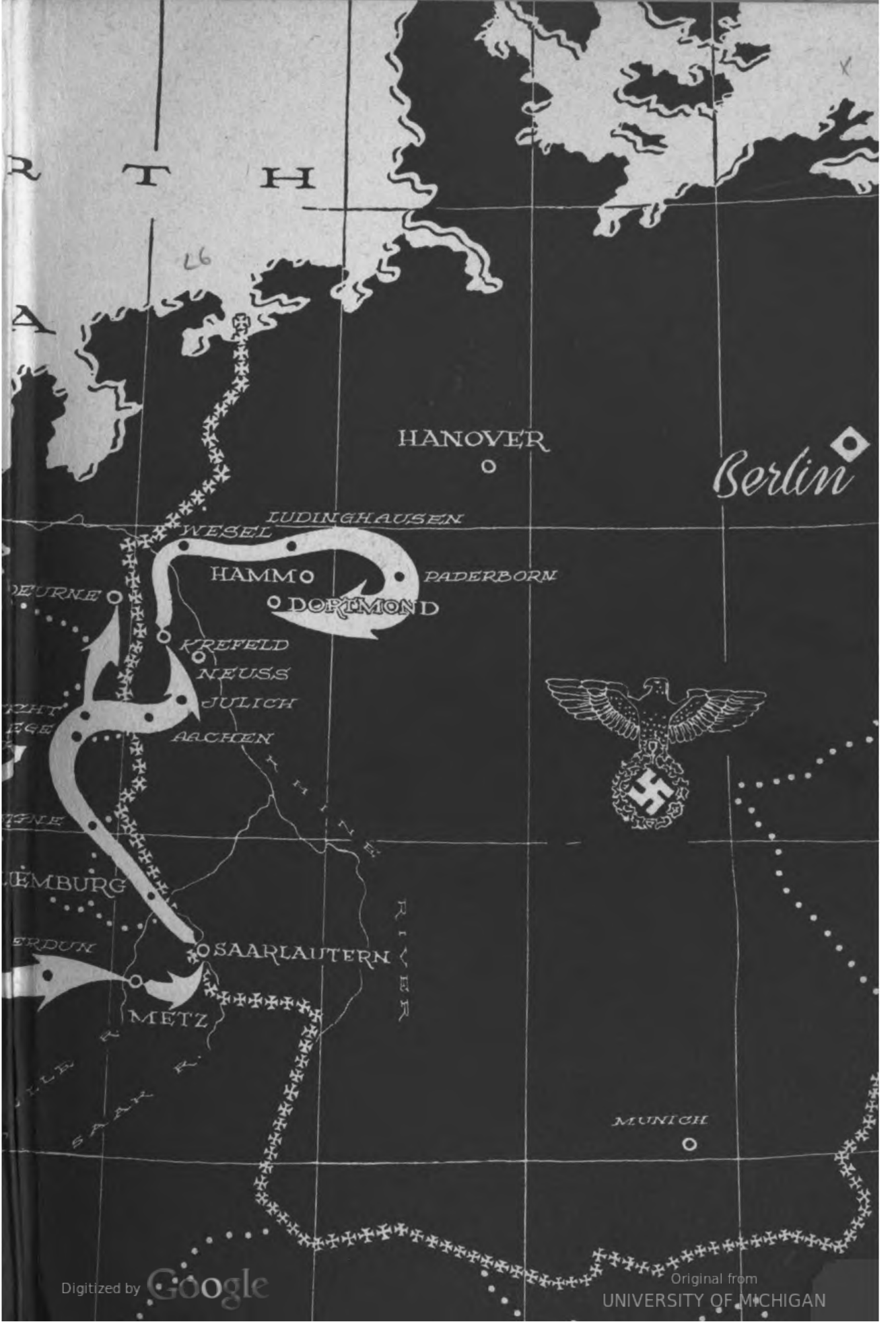
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Ninety-Fifth Infantry Division

HISTORY

1918 - 1946



By
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and
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With maps and drawings by
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Major General Harry L. Twaddle, Commander, 95th Infantry Division, Second World War

Acknowledgment

The members of the 95th Infantry Division shall ever be grateful to Captain George M. Fuermann and First Sergeant F. Edward Cranz for the production of our Division History. Reminded perhaps oftener than was necessary by the Division Commander of the ultimate desire of all of us for a permanent record of the Division's participation in World War II, these two untiring individuals never ceased in their efforts to assemble data, orders, reports, operation maps and photographs, later to be finally assembled and used in the writing of the history.

Captain Fuermann who served as the Division Public Relations Officer and Historical Officer throughout the long period of training in the States and throughout operations in the European theater supervised the preparation of the text and assumed responsibility of carrying it through to its final completion. Aside from this enormous task, it was his initiative, resourcefulness, and perseverance which produced for us "Prelude" and "Victory", besides the many press releases to home-town newspapers informing the folks at home of the honors won and of the acts of heroism performed by their soldier sons.

To First Sergeant Cranz (formerly Sergeant Major, Second Battalion, 378th Infantry Regiment) full credit is given for the actual writing of more than half of the text and painstaking scrutiny of the remainder. A graduate of Harvard University where he majored in history, earning his PhD, he offered unselfishly his high professional ability, and diligently researched source material with a view of finding out actually what took place, and then presenting the facts in narrative form. Since his return to Connecticut College, where he is instructing in history, he has contributed immeasurably in the final completion of this book.

Portions of the initial draft were written by Robert S. Ball (of the DETROIT NEWS) and Richard E. Doyle (of the Portland, Maine, HERALD EXPRESS), both members of the 95th Division Public Relations Section. Nathan Amcham (of New York City and the 377th Infantry Regiment) did much valuable research work, and Joseph J. Crnkovic (of Chicago) was most valuable as secretary to the Division Historical Section which was set up at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, following the Division's inactivation on October 15, 1945.

An editorial committee composed of the general officers of the Division, the Chief of Staff, the Infantry Regimental Commanders, and the Division Engineer carefully checked the completed manuscript for factual accuracy.

To all who have so thoughtfully and generously devoted their time and effort to produce this, our Division History, we all extend sincere thanks and appreciation.

THE DIVISION COMMANDER

Preface

The second World War is still too recent for any man or any group of men to write its history. This is particularly true of a single Infantry Division's participation in that war, for the perspective of time does not yet permit unbiased and wholly accurate appraisals, but if it is not yet possible to write the final history of parts and wholes, of causes and results, it is possible and necessary to write the less ambitious date-and-fact histories on which the final account must be based. This the authors have attempted to do for the 95th Infantry Division.

It may be argued that individuals have been minimized in this history, that there are too few soldiers in it, particularly of that group which is popularly known as "G. I. Joes", but this is almost inevitable in the tactical history of an organization the size of an Infantry Division. A history of a Battalion or of a Regiment might well include narratives of many acts of heroism and human interest experiences of individuals, but to incorporate them in a history of a Division with its nine Infantry Battalions, four Field Artillery Battalions, Combat Engineer Battalion, Medical Battalion, besides the Division Headquarters Company, Ordnance Company, Quartermaster Company, Reconnaissance Troops, Military Police Platoon and Band, in all approximately 14,000 officers and enlisted men, would present an insurmountable problem of research for facts. To include even a small proportion of the known incidents would increase the work to inordinate length, and to select them fairly would be an impossible task.

Another kind of 95th Infantry Division history could be written and perhaps it should be—one which would be primarily concerned with the "blood and steel" stories of the Division's heroes and with the anecdotes of training and of battle. Surely, such a history would be more interesting to read. What is offered here is essentially a factual, tactical account of the Division's operations which regularly and necessarily extends to the operations of the Infantry companies.

For the members of the Division this work will be an authoritative source for their fireside accounts of participation, and for the students of military history and historians, a valuable and authentic source in their research for facts pertaining to combat operations.

In the writing of the history the authors have interviewed many of the men "who were there" in the cases of certain operations of particular importance, but it was obviously impossible to employ such a procedure generally in a work of this scope and a variety of other sources were used. Two principal types of sources may be distinguished. In the first place, there are the official documents and

records contemporary with the action; and in the second place, there are various narrative accounts written later.

The first group includes the War Room Journal of Division Headquarters which also incorporates material of the general staff journals, the journals of the three Infantry regiments and certain battalions, the field orders and other official documents of the Division, including the general staff periodic reports. In addition, similar material was available in some instances from Corps (particular mention is made of the XX Corps G-2 periodic reports) and from adjacent divisions. The second group is more diversified. Day-to-day history or chronology of the Division's operations was prepared monthly by the Division Historian, and monthly "after action reports" were submitted by the General Staff Sections, by the three Infantry Regiments, the Division Artillery, and by attached units. Special reports were occasionally called for by Division or by higher headquarters on particular operations. Such reports were made, for example, on the Metz operation, the Thionville bridgehead operation, the seizure of the Saarlautern bridge, and the German New Years' Day counterattack.

A somewhat different kind of material was found in the reports of the interviews conducted by the Army's "Fourth Information and Historical Service." These covered such operations as the 378th Infantry Regiment's operations at Metz and in the Saar Basin and the entire Division's fight in the Ruhr Pocket. There were also more extended narrative accounts written largely from the viewpoint of particular units. The authors were permitted to make use of work currently being done on the histories of the 377th Infantry Regiment, the 379th Infantry Regiment and the 320th Engineer Battalion (Combat), as well as brief outlines of the histories of the Division Artillery, the 95th Reconnaissance Troops and of the 320th Medical Battalion. Finally some use was made of the information contained in Division field orders.

THE AUTHORS

"Blessed Is America"

The 95th United States Infantry Division was one of sixty-six American infantry divisions to be committed against the Axis nations during the Second World War. The 95th Infantry Division was neither a Regular Army division nor a National Guard division. It was a typical example of the civilian, war-time Army, for the vast majority of its junior officers and enlisted men came into the Army through the National Selective Service Act of 1940. Fundamentally, it was little different from any other American infantry division. All infantry divisions underwent similar training programs; all infantry divisions that fought in France, Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland or Germany experienced conditions and combat which were generally similar; the veterans of all the armed forces who fought overseas knew the same feelings of homesickness, loneliness and, sometimes, despair; and, ordinarily, all infantry divisions successfully accomplished their assigned missions. Perhaps the only general and consistent difference in American's infantry divisions was in the specific locations of their fighting. Some infantry divisions, of course, were committed much longer than others, some divisions killed, wounded or captured more German soldiers than others, and some divisions were involved in more spectacular and historic operations than others. And, clearly, some divisions were better than others.

How the 95th Division compared with the sixty-five other infantry divisions is not known by the authors of this book. Nor do the authors know to what extent the combat operations of the 95th Division affected the main course of the European war. But certain facts indicate that the 95th Division had a proportionate share in the final victory.

The Division was committed against the German army for 145 days, including one period of 103 consecutive days. During this time, 6,370 officially recorded casualties were suffered by the Division. The actual losses were greater by an estimated two thousand since the official figure for the wounded includes only hospital cases. A total of 1,128 95th Division officers and men were killed in action, and 4,783 were wounded. In addition, 391 officers and men were listed as missing in action as of May 19, 1945, and sixty-eight were still listed as prisoners of war.

To inflict 6,370 casualties on the Division, the Germans suffered a conservatively estimated 47,264 casualties, a ratio of approximately eight to one. Of the total, 15,276 Germans were killed or wounded in opposing the Division, and 31,988 were captured. The Division conquered 728 square miles of France and Germany, and captured 439 French and German cities, towns and villages, including (together

with the 5th Infantry Division) the famed French fortress city of Metz and Germany's ninth largest city, Dortmund. Twelve German divisions—panzer, paratroop and volksgrenadier—and 225 miscellaneous units of varying descriptions and capabilities opposed the Division's advance in the 145 days of fighting.

Many American infantry divisions have records which are more imposing than that of the 95th Division, and some have less significant battle records. But this history has not been written to compare the 95th Division with any other fighting unit. It is intended to be only what the title says it is—the history of the 95th Infantry Division.

How the German High Command rated the Division as a fighting unit, if it were so rated at all, is not known. But it is known that the German soldiers at Metz labeled the Division's troops "The Iron Men of Metz", and this phrase was no invention of the Division Public Relations Office. However, an enemy document captured by the 1st U. S. Infantry Division gives a clear picture of one German intelligence officer's opinion of America's soldiers in general, for to this enemy officer the American soldiers' sentiments could be stated in three words: "Blessed is America".

"The American soldier considers America a country which 'is blessed with all the good things this earth can give,' the document stated. "The American loves his country for all its economic wealth, which gives each man a chance to make a good living. The American is certain that his superior economic strength and productivity will decide the war and will be later an effective force for peacetime security for all the world. This conviction gives him strong national pride and strength to see the war through to complete victory. The average American is not fond of the war and only wishes to finish it as soon as possible and go back home." The German officer's last conclusion, at any rate, was a truth that defied denial, and some of his other observations were at least half-truths.

The captured document went on to describe why, in the opinion of its German writer, America went to war. "The American gives these three main reasons for going to war: Japanese economic menace to high living conditions of the American people; the attack at Pearl Harbor was a challenge to the American national pride; Germany, as an ally of Japan, declared war on America and endangered the Americans' chances of success because of the Germans' technical ability and vitality." The authors do not agree with the German writer, but right or wrong, there is no room here to analyze the causes of the Second World War. The war was a fact, and as a result of it the 95th Infantry Division, with thousands of other units

of the armed forces, was activated to help fight the war.

April 1, 1944, Under Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson (later Secretary of War) visited the Division at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, witnessing many of its training activities and a Division review. Before returning to Washington, he remarked to newsmen, "I am sure that dispatches from the battlefield will recall the 95th Division to my mind with the greatest pride." Eight months later, Mr. Patterson had an opportunity to confirm his confidence in the Division. In an early December press conference, he stated, "The 95th Division performed with great distinction in clearing a path into the German city of Saarlautern and then seizing, intact, a bridge across the Saar."

The importance of one infantry division, which is composed of approximately fifteen thousand officers and men, in proportion to America's total armed might is comparable to less than a minute in twelve hours. The next few hundred pages are a history of that "less than a minute" of America's part in the Second World War.

The narrative does not begin at the beginning of the Division's history. The story opens on October 20, 1944, the first day of the Division's commitment in any war. The brief history of the Division in the First World War and the pre-combat Second World War history is discussed in the last two chapters of the book.

THE PAGNY BRIDGEHEAD

The 95th Infantry Division entered combat October 20, 1944, as a part of the XX Corps of the Third U. S. Army. While the Division had been in England and in Normandy, during August and September, the surging drive of the Allied Armies had carried spearheads across the whole of France. In the north the First U. S. Army had crossed the German border and had successfully assaulted the outer defenses of the Siegfried Line. The Third U. S. Army, swinging in a wide arc around Paris, had driven deep into Luxembourg and Alsace-Lorraine. In the south the Seventh U. S. Army, racing north from Marseilles, had reached the Belfort Gap. The German armies, shattered by the power and speed of the Allied advance, could not stem the tide. But the inevitable laws of logistics were working for the Germans and against the Allies; the American spearheads outran their supply columns, and by the end of September the first great effort had spent itself. The Germans were able to resume the defensive and to regroup their armies to meet the threat of a new Allied thrust.

In the north their choice was dictated; they had been forced back into the Siegfried Line and there they must hold. In the south, however, the drive had stopped short of the German border, and excellent defensive positions of terrain and fortification were still available on French soil. The Germans elected to make use of these and to delay as long as possible withdrawal to the final defenses of the Siegfried Line and the Rhine. On the Third Army front the Germans took up positions extending generally north to south along the Moselle and Seille rivers, and the pivot of the new positions was Fortress Metz, key point of a salient extending into the XX Corps sector of the front.

During late September and early October the XX Corps intensified its pressure against the Metz salient. To the north after bitter house to house fighting the 90th Division took a large part of Maizières-Metz and thereby threatened to outflank the semicircle of great forts which protect Metz on the west and northwest. To the south of the city, the 5th Infantry Division gained a bridgehead across the Moselle.

Stubborn opposition, supported by the artillery of the Metz forts, prevented its immediate exploitation, but the XX Corps now had observation east of the Moselle and was in a position to threaten Metz from the south. Finally, XX Corps tested the strength of Fortress Metz against frontal assault. The 5th Infantry Division twice attacked Fort Driant, perhaps the mightiest of the circle of great forts surrounding the city. The second attack was launched October 3 with a force of more than regimental strength. Infantry stormed across the moat and breached the outer walls; at one time the southwestern third of the fort's area, including two concrete barracks and the perimeter defense of pillboxes, was in American hands, and 5th Division troops had even penetrated some distance into the intricate structure of the main fortifications. However, the artillery of the near-by forts kept up almost continuous fire both on the approaches to Fort Driant and on its exposed surfaces, and in the weird fighting within the fort the Germans had all the advantages of prepared defenses and of long familiarity with the complicated system of communications. No decisive result could be achieved, and on October 12 Third Army ordered the costly attack abandoned and the American forces in Fort Driant withdrawn.

The Germans intended to hold the Metz salient until they were forced back by a large-scale offensive, and the Metz salient would have to be reduced before the Third Army drive to the Rhine could be resumed. Toward the end of October, plans and preparations for this offensive were nearing completion. New troops were being assigned to the Third Army, among them the untried 95th Division, and huge supply stock piles were being built up behind the lines. The Third Army had selected the Frankfurt-Darmstadt area as its ultimate objective, and XX Corps, in position before Metz, would initially execute the main effort. The Corps mission was to "encircle and destroy the garrison of the Metz fortified area and to seize a bridgehead over the Saar River in the vicinity of Saarburg." To accomplish its mission, XX Corps had available, in addition to supporting troops, three infantry divisions, the 5th, 90th and 95th, and one armored division, the 10th.

The operations of the 95th Division from October 20, 1944, through January 29, 1945, are all associated with this Corps mission. In the first phase, from October 20 through November 1, the 95th Division relieved the 5th Infantry Division in the bridgehead which the latter had gained south of Metz. The XX Corps was not yet ready for the planned offensive, and the mission of the Division was merely to maintain the bridgehead and to keep the enemy off balance. In the second phase, from November 2 through November 23, the 95th

Division moved into position facing the forts northwest of Metz and after a short waiting period played an important part in the assault and capture of the city. The attack was begun November 8, intensified November 15, and by November 22 the last pocket of resistance in the city had been reduced. In the third phase, from November 24 through December 19, the Division first participated in the drive east from Metz through the Maginot line and across the German border to the Saar and on December 3 captured intact a bridge at Saarlautern. For the next two weeks the Division expanded the Saarlautern bridgehead against violent opposition and at the same time gained and expanded a second bridgehead at Ensdorf just south of Saarlautern. On December 18, the Division was relieved in the Saarlautern bridgehead by the 5th Division, but it continued to expand the Ensdorf bridgehead and participated in the new Corps attack to the northeast. In the fourth phase, from December 20, 1944, through January 29, 1945, XX Corps (as a result of the German offensive in the Ardennes) passed to the defensive in the Saar and sent much of its strength including the 5th Division to the north. Accordingly, the 95th Division again took over the Saarlautern bridgehead after relieving the 5th Division, abandoned the Ensdorf bridgehead on Corps order and extended its lines more thinly to cover its increased front along the Saar. While patrolling was aggressively continued and while several limited objective attacks were launched, the Division remained on the defensive with no important change in the front lines until the end of January when it was transferred from XX Corps to VIII Corps and moved north to the Bastogne area.

The 95th Division had left the United States in early August of 1944 and after a month in England had crossed the Channel to Normandy. Here during late September and early October the Division was in bivouac in the vicinity of Trevieres and at the same time organized and operated a provisional truck regiment under the Ninth U. S. Army.¹ On October 5 orders were received to discontinue operations of the truck regiment, and the Division began its final preparations for combat. By October 9, all Division vehicles had closed into the Trevieres area, and all non-organic transportation had been turned over to the 102nd Infantry Division, which was to continue the operation. Meanwhile, on October 7, the 95th Division was directed by III Corps, Ninth U. S. Army, to prepare for a rail and motor movement to an assembly area in the vicinity of Longuyon (about 45 miles northwest of Metz).

The advance party, headed by Brig. Gen. Don C. Faith,^o left the

¹For the history of the Division during these months see Chapter V.

Normandy area by motor October 8. Of the main body of the Division, part was to move by motor and the remainder by rail. The rail movement began October 9 when the first train left from Carentan, to which the troops had made the short trip from their previous bivouac area by motor and where they made an overnight bivouac before entraining.

The trains consisted largely of the old "40 and 8" cars of World War I fame, and the crowding was such as to make the sleeping quarters of the Atlantic crossing seem spacious in retrospect. However, the men made the best use of what little space there was, and life was democratic and cooperative by necessity in a car where no one could turn over without the consent and reciprocal movement of all his neighbors. The lack of Lebensraum on the car floor led to the construction of ingenious hammocks and to the utilization of precarious sleeping quarters on the roof. Nevertheless, by the end of the four-day trip an apparently stable and good-humored society was in operation, and it was with a certain savoir-faire that troops snatched from the fire their canteen cups of coffee, often only half heated, and boarded the moving train at the end of one of the many unpredictable stops.

The motor movement began October 11, and the last serial left the next day. Three days were required for the trip. At the end of the first, a bivouac was made at LeMans, somewhat over a hundred miles southwest of Paris, and at the end of the second, near the famous race-track of Longjumeau, about 15 miles south of Paris.

Meanwhile, the advance party had reported to Ninth Army Headquarters at Arlon, Belgium October 10. There General Faith^o was informed that the 95th Division was relieved of assignment to the Ninth Army and was assigned to the Third Army. General Faith^o immediately called Third Army Headquarters and was told that the 95th Division would be in the XX Corps and that a Corps representative would meet the advance party of the Division at Longuyon October 11. Following this meeting, Division units were rerouted in accord with XX Corps instructions and by October 14 the 95th Division had closed into an assembly area in the vicinity of Norroy-le-Sec, about 20 miles northwest of Metz. From it, one could hear the rumble and, at night, see the flash of artillery pounding at Fortress Metz.

While the Division was still in the assembly area near Norroy-le-Sec, the Army Commander, General George S. Patton, Jr. visited it for the first time. At Division Headquarters he addressed an audience consisting of all field grade officers and one officer and one non-commissioned officer from each company-sized unit. General Patton

pointed out that the Division was fortunate to receive its battle baptism in what was at the moment a holding sector. However, the greater portion of his talk dealt with tactics of offensive fighting, and he emphasized the importance of "marching fire." In contrast to the teachings of maneuver days, General Patton disapproved of "hitting the ground" and of "digging in" when coming under enemy fire. He maintained that the Germans knew where they wanted the Americans to stop, that they would open fire at this point, and that they would then direct planned mortar and artillery fire on the halted troops. The correct solution, according to General Patton, was to continue the forward movement and to maintain fire, not necessarily against any particular target but against the area of advance. Third Army experience had proved that the Germans would not face this marching fire, and that its use both reduced American casualties and speeded the attack. These ideas, expressed with characteristic Patton vigor, were passed on to the rest of the Division by those who had been present at the talk, and marching fire became an integral part of 95th Division tactics.

By XX Corps Operations Instructions No. 24, of October 12, the 95th Division had been assigned three missions. First, it was to "assemble in present area (Norroy-le-Sec) and prepare for action without delay." Second, it was to "relieve 5th Infantry Division east of Moselle River by successive regimental combat teams as they become available." Third, the Division would, "by vigorous and aggressive patrolling within the bridgehead, maintain continuous pressure to keep the enemy off balance."

Preparations for the relief of the 5th Division in the Pagny bridgehead were begun as soon as the Division reached Norroy-le-Sec. Two movements were involved; first, the movement to a forward assembly area, and, second, the actual relief of the 5th Division on the line. In each case, small groups made preliminary reconnaissance. The movement to the forward assembly area was begun October 17, and the night of October 18-19 the first 95th Division units moved into the line, including the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry, 1st Battalion 378th Infantry and the 1st Battalion 379th Infantry. By October 20 the three regiments had completed their relief, and at 1800 October 20 General Twaddle assumed command of the sector. The combat history of the 95th Division had begun.

The Division took over from the 5th Infantry Division a sector of approximately ten miles in the north portion of the Third U. S. Army Moselle bridgehead. In the Division zone the ground rose rapidly east of the Moselle to a ridge more than 500 feet above the river, and the main Division positions were located between this

ridge and the Seille River. The Division sector was on the right flank of XX Corps and on its right was the 80th Division of XII Corps. All three regiments were on the line, the 379th Infantry on the left, the 378th Infantry in the center, and the 377th Infantry on the right.¹

The following units were attached to the 95th Division for the Pagny bridgehead operation: the 547th Anti-Aircraft-Artillery Battalion, the 284th Field Artillery Battalion, the 735th Tank Battalion, Company A 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion, Company A 818th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Companies C and D 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion. In addition, the following units had been placed in general support: the 33rd Field Artillery Brigade, the 5th Field Artillery Group, the 204th Field Artillery Group and the 1103rd Engineer Group.

The 95th Division's Field Order No. 1, issued October 21, declared that the Division mission was to maintain the bridgehead east of the Moselle and to conduct active and vigorous patrolling to keep the enemy off balance. Each of the regiments was given the same mission within its assigned zone, and to each of them was attached one company of the 320th Medical Battalion and one company of the 735th Tank Battalion. The 95th Reconnaissance Troop was given the special mission of manning a series of observation posts on the extreme right flank of the Division. The 3rd Battalion, 377th Infantry, in Division reserve, was to prepare three counterattack plans in coordination with Company D of the 735th Tank Battalion. In order of priority these plans were: 1. Against an enemy penetration in the zone of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry. 2. Against an enemy penetration along the boundary between the 1st and 2nd battalions 379th Infantry. 3. Against an enemy penetration along the boundary between the 1st and 2nd battalions 378th Infantry.

¹On the left of the Division sector the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry tied into the Moselle southwest of Corny. It made contact on its left with the 90th Infantry Division, which had given the 2nd Battalion 358th Infantry the mission of patrolling the Moselle River from a point west of Corny to the boundary of the 90th and 95th Divisions near Noveant. The 1st Battalion 379th Infantry held the high ground through the Corny woods to Marieulles, where it made contact with the 378th Infantry Regiment. The 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry was in regimental reserve. The 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, to the right of the 1st Battalion 379th Infantry, held part of the wooded area east of Marieulles, and the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry was disposed to that unit's right in the same woods. The 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry held the sector extending from these woods to a point about 2,000 yards north of Longueville-les-Cheminot. The 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry extended the front south through Longueville and thence to the west along the high ground to the Seille River, making contact on its right with the 80th Division. The 1st Battalion 377th Infantry was in regimental reserve near the farm Bel-Air, and the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry, together with Company D of the 735th Tank Battalion, was in Division reserve at Vittonville.

The 320th Engineer Battalion was assigned normal engineer missions with priority given to the maintenance of roads east of the Moselle River.

The 95th Division Artillery, with its attachments, was to support with fire the Division effort and was to be prepared to repel a possible tank attack. Each of the regiments was given certain units in direct support. The 379th Infantry had Group Watkins (359th Field Artillery Battalion with the 284th Field Artillery Battalion and Company D of the 81st Chemical Battalion attached); the 378th Infantry had the 358th Field Artillery Battalion with Company C 81st Chemical Battalion attached; and the 377th Infantry had the 920th Field Artillery Battalion. The 547th A. A. A. Battalion was to provide anti-aircraft protection in the Division zone with special attention to Division Artillery positions; in addition it was to provide anti-aircraft protection to the bridges over the Moselle at Arnville and Pagny with not less than one battery.

Field Order No. 1 ended with the general directive: "Battle positions will be held at all cost! All individuals and elements will be ruthless in destruction of all enemy attempts to penetrate battle positions. In this connection detailed plans for employing reserves, including use of tanks and maximum supporting fires, will be maintained by all units." Major General Harry L. Twaddle the Division Commander emphasized this directive at his staff briefings. The 5th Division had done excellent work in gaining observation east of the Moselle, and the 95th had no intention of giving it back to the enemy. Particular importance was attached to the commanding point, Hill 396.1, whose loss would endanger the whole bridgehead position.

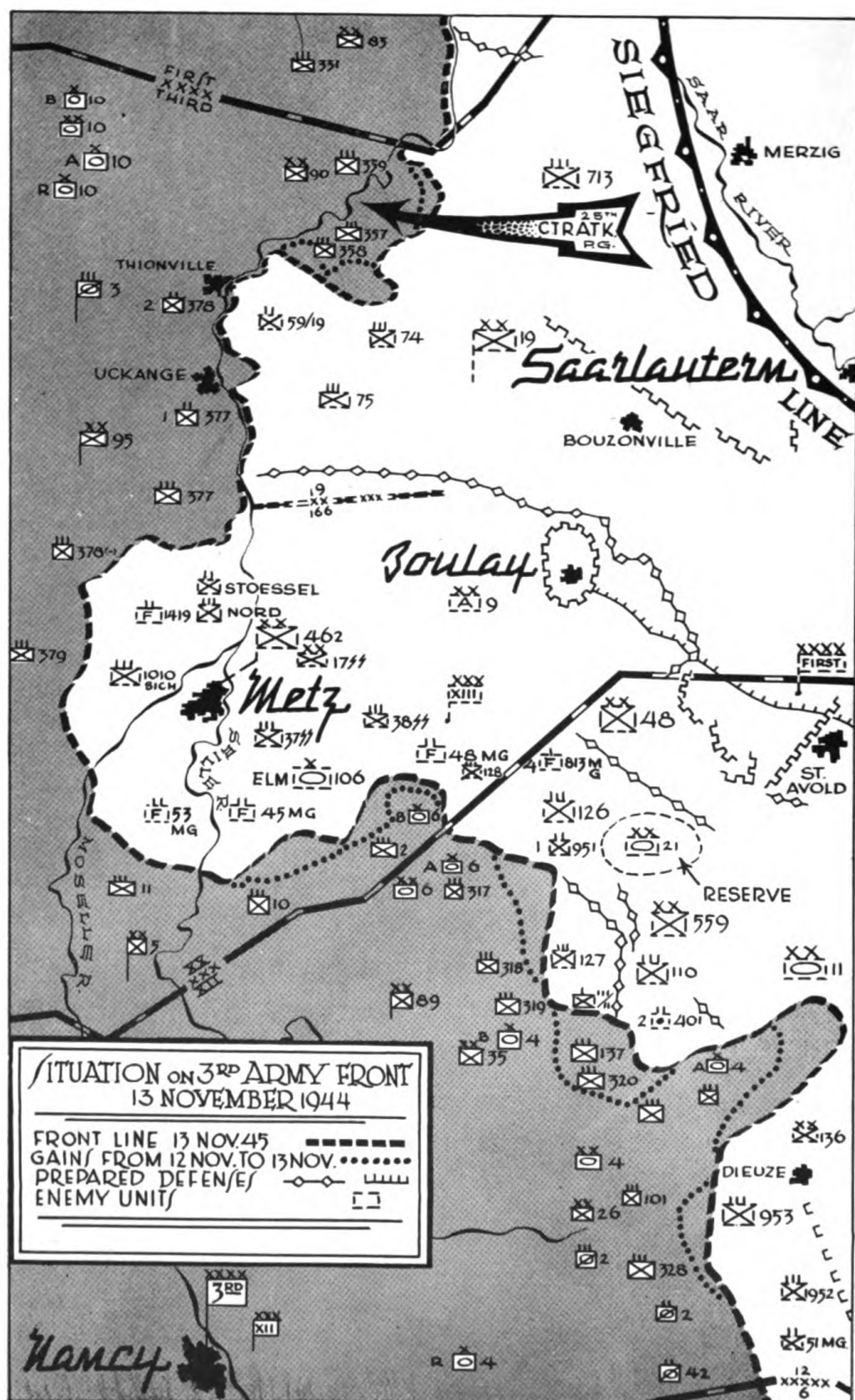
By October 23, the Division counterattack plans had been completed, and XX Corps was prepared to use a regimental combat team of the 5th Infantry Division or, if necessary, the entire division, to repel any large scale German counterattack against the bridgehead positions. Finally, artillery fires had been arranged in coordination with these counterattack plans, and in addition to Division Artillery it was estimated that fifteen battalions of Corps Artillery would be available in case of need. Despite several false alarms, no counterattacks were directed against the Division while it held the Pagny bridgehead, and the battle line remained unchanged throughout the period.

It was Division policy at this time that no rifleman should remain in the line for more than five days without relief, and there was, consequently, considerable shifting of units between the line and reserve. As all three regiments were on the line this took place only on bat-

talion and company level. In the 377th Infantry sector, for example, the 1st Battalion relieved the 2nd Battalion the night of October 27-28. October 29 the 2nd Battalion became Division reserve, and its place as regimental reserve was taken by the 3rd Battalion. There were also changes within various battalions of the Division, and in the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, for example, Company G, previously in reserve, relieved Company E October 29. On October 24, a change in regimental boundary was effected in order to provide greater defensive strength, and the 377th Infantry relieved elements of the 378th Infantry.

When the 95th Division went into the line October 20, the 5th Division Intelligence Section gave the following picture of the German strength on its front. The sector was under the control of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division (known as the Goetz von Berlichingen Division). This division had been activated in June, 1943, and had first been engaged by American forces in the Normandy battle near Carentan about June 12. By August 5, the division had been virtually wiped out, but it continued to remain in contact with the Third United States Army during the drive across France and had been reinforced with remnants of other units. By September the division had lost its original organizational form and had become an aggregate of various Kampfgruppen (Battle Groups). Its strength was estimated at approximately 1500 veterans in addition to 1500 poorly trained replacements.

Four units had been identified on the Division front, although some of the identifications had not been recently confirmed and prisoner-of-war reports indicated that preparations were in progress for the relief of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division so that it might reform and reorganize in the Saar. To the north was the 2nd Battalion of the 37th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, with an estimated strength of 500 men. Three companies were believed to be on the line and one in reserve. To the south was Battle Group Berg, of which only two companies had been identified although the unit was supposed to be of battalion strength. The personnel appeared to be largely SS signal troops, some from the 17th SS Signal Battalion, and Luftwaffe signal troops. As far as was known, the 3rd Battalion of the 37th Regiment was also present on the Division front, but it was apparently in process of being relieved by the 53rd Machine Gun Fortress Battalion. Of this battalion only 2 companies had been contacted but prisoner-of-war reports indicated that two more were to be expected. The personnel were said to be drawn from industry, from convalescent companies and from straggler points; many were suffering from physical deficiencies such as the loss of an eye or from



wounds not yet completely healed, and morale was low. In addition to these infantry units the 17th SS Artillery Regiment was believed to be present in the Division sector.

Consequently, it appeared that the line opposite the 95th Division was held by a relatively small number of troops, possibly between 1500 and 2000 men. This line could, in case of need, be supported by a tremendous volume of artillery fire from the great Metz forts, and it was primarily this fire which had forced the 5th Division to withdraw from several villages directly to the front of the positions which they turned over to the 95th Division.

In the Intelligence Annex which accompanied Field Order No. 1 of October 21 it was stated: "Attitude of Germans in our zone has been defensive since present positions were established by the 5th Infantry Division approximately three weeks ago. Occasional Artillery and mortar fires have been laid down by the enemy, and sporadic small arms fire has been encountered by friendly forces." This summary could be applied with little change to the period from October 20 to November 1, during which the bridgehead sector was held by the 95th Division.

The enemy patrolled, but unaggressively. On October 20 two squads attacked an American outpost and succeeded in forcing a withdrawal. Several small sneak patrols were sent out by the Germans the night of October 24-25, and almost every night some patrol activity was reported. On a number of occasions broadcasts were directed at 95th Division troops. In the sector of the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry American swing music was played by the enemy the night of October 20-21. This was followed by an appeal to the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Infantry Regiment to surrender himself and his men; good care and hot food were guaranteed. It was a tribute to the security measures of the Division that its move into the Pagny bridgehead had apparently been effected without the knowledge of the Germans, who believed they were speaking to a regiment of the 5th Division. Propaganda broadcasts were again heard the night of October 22-23, but it was thought that on this occasion the primary purpose was to cover the noise made by the digging of new defensive positions. Enemy artillery was light, and the most received during any twenty-four hour period did not much exceed a hundred rounds. The greatest part of this artillery came from Forts Driant,^o Verdun^o South and North, and Sommy.^o In addition, there were a number of instances of heavy mortar concentrations, although nothing to compare with what the Division would later encounter in the Saar.

Little irregular or civilian opposition was encountered, despite the

fact that the population was by no means unanimously in sympathy with the Allies. On October 23 telephone wires were cut at several points in the town of Arnaville,^o but the incident was never explained. On October 22, members of the 95th Reconnaissance Troop arrested two German espionage agents. Roger Lecru and Pierre Montaricout, at Lesmenils.^o Confessions were obtained from both and they were later shot as spies. The two men were Parisians who had gone to Germany on the promise of office work. Instead they were taken to an "Identification School" at Hansbarcher^o where, for fifteen days, they studied American shoulder patches and vehicle identification symbols. On October 21 they left the school and on October 22, at a command post in Cheminot,^o not far from the 95th Division positions, they received their final briefing. They were to proceed through the lines to a road junction about half a mile north of Pont-a-Mousson^o and to note all vehicle and personnel identification symbols at this point. By dawn of October 23, at the latest, they were to have returned to the command post and made their report.

While the 95th Division occupied the Pagny^o bridgehead, evidence gradually accumulated that the Germans were effecting a general rearrangement of their front line units. While the changes might be obscure in detail, it was clear that units of the 17th SS Division were being recalled from the line, probably for reorganization and refitment, and were being systematically replaced by units of the German regular army (Wehrmacht).

From the standpoint of the XX Corps operation the achievement of the 95th Division from October 20 through November 1 was that it maintained the Pagny bridgehead and kept the enemy off balance by aggressive and vigorous patrolling. From the standpoint of the 95th Division the by-products of this achievement were perhaps equally important. The Division had the opportunity to test and to perfect under combat conditions (but in a fortunately static situation) the workings of a complex military organization. In the first place, there was the relief itself which had been accomplished strictly according to the "book" and which had taken a week from warning order to completion. There had been full reconnaissance both of the forward assembly areas and of the actual battle positions. Some 95th Division officers spent several days with the units of the 5th Division prior to the relief, and representatives of the 5th Division remained to advise for a short time after the relief had been executed. The relief was executed smoothly, and the worst difficulties to be overcome resulted from the recent heavy rains which had done great damage to the road net and which denied the use of one of the three Moselle bridges. The execution of a relief in this way, an experience

largely duplicated in the move from the bridgehead to Metz, gave the 95th Division something of an intuitive familiarity with the mechanics of a relief under combat conditions, and on later occasions the whole process could be telescoped and completed in far less time and with far less formal preparation.

In the second place, and more important, there was the actual contact with the enemy. For the front line troops there was the continuous manning of the main battle positions and of the forward outposts. In addition there was extensive patrolling, and here the training of large numbers of men in a difficult technique was perhaps of equal importance with the immediate results. Back of the front lines there existed a complex organization designed to support and to direct the forward infantry. This system demanded an extensive network of communications, maintained in the first place by the 95th Signal Company and at regimental and battalion level by the respective communications platoons. The primary medium was telephone, and regular lines ran from Division to Corps and Army on the one hand and on the other hand to its own units down through companies. In addition, the various parts of the Division were linked by radio, although radio silence was normal during the bridgehead operation. Finally, there were regular motor messenger runs from Division and regimental headquarters, and the battalion message centers maintained contact with the companies by runners. A largely separate system of communications by wire and radio linked Division Artillery with the front line units, and the forward observer teams and liaison sections attached to the infantry battalions had direct communication with the field artillery battalions in support.

An elaborate supply system was necessary to keep the various units adequately equipped with food, ammunition, fuel and equipment. At the Division level this was maintained by the G-4 section and by the Quartermaster Company, and at regimental level by the S-4 sections and the Service companies. The 795th Ordnance Company aided in keeping weapons and vehicles in operating condition. The 320th Medical Battalion had under its control a series of installations for the care and the evacuation of wounded. The battalion aid stations were the fundamental units, and evacuation was effected by the collecting and clearing companies. The 320th Engineer Battalion was prepared to support units who needed engineer assistance and, in a static situation such as the Pagny bridgehead, was primarily occupied with road and bridge maintenance. Further to the rear, the paper and administrative work of the Division was carried on by the Rear Echelon including the Division Administrative Center, the Adjutant

General's Office, Inspector General's Office, Judge Advocate General's Office and the Army Post Office.

Finally, it was the responsibility of the various headquarters, in particular those of the three regiments, of Division Artillery and of Division itself, to coordinate the operations of units under their control and to ensure the accurate reporting and rapid transmission of information concerning enemy activities. Operations were directed by the various "3" sections, and a summary of the Division's activities was issued daily by the G-3 Section at Division Headquarters. Information concerning the enemy was handled by the "2" sections, and here again a daily report gave the G-2 picture at Division level. The command decisions on the lower levels were made by the commanding officers of the various units, while the over-all command decisions were made by General Twaddle,^o assisted by General Faith,^o and the over-all supervision of the Division Staff work was effected by Col. Harvey J. Golightly,^o Chief of Staff.

While in the bridgehead the Division learned to make all these "Standard Operating Procedures" (SOP) more or less second nature, and there would come a time when they would be performed almost automatically while conscious attention was concentrated on particular points of difficulty and on combat decisions. In general the more defensive and static the situation the closer was the supervision exercised by the various headquarters. To a certain extent the same applies to a carefully planned attack, but in any rapidly moving situation such as the 95th was to experience in the attack on Metz and in the drive to the Saar, higher headquarters was compelled to relinquish a great deal of the responsibility for decisions of detail to the lower units and all headquarters were compelled to assume that SOP systems of supply and communication would function without extensive guidance.

A day by day account of the holding of the bridgehead would be largely repetitious, and it will be more profitable to summarize the activities of the various organizations with emphasis on certain highlights. Two "firsts" might be noted here. The first casualties of the Division were sustained by Company C, 378th Infantry, when five men were injured by enemy artillery fire at 1720 October 18 as they were crossing the ridge to the rear of the regimental command post at Lorry.^o The first prisoners of war were taken by Company A 378th Infantry during the night of October 18-19.

Patrolling was carried on aggressively, and several patrols were sent out nightly. Among these were several large patrols supported by prepared artillery fires. On October 23, for example, the 379th Infantry sent out a patrol of one officer and eight enlisted men with

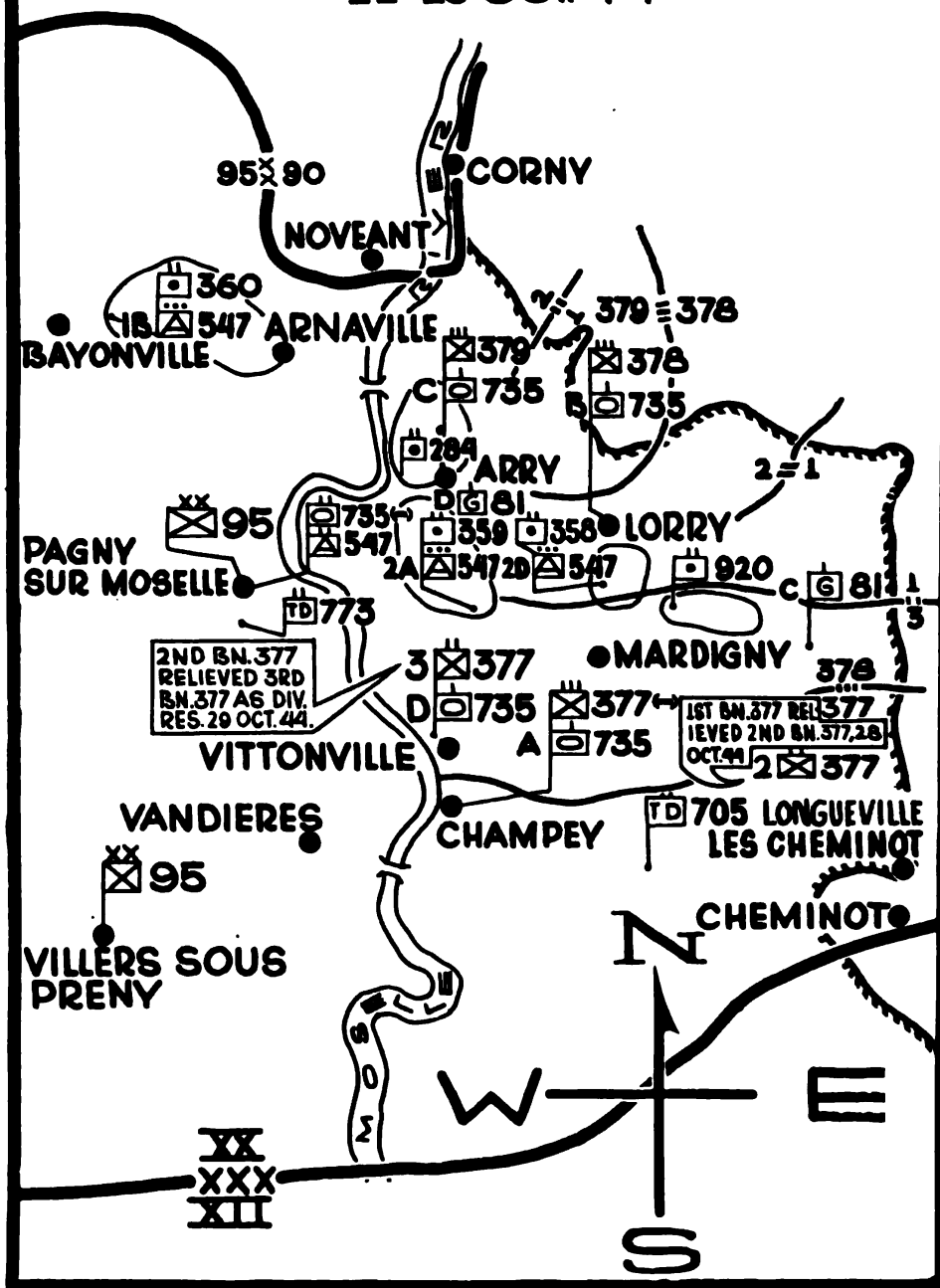
the mission of reconnoitering a road junction to the front. On the way out the patrol received white phosphorus and high explosive mortar fire. However, they proceeded to the road junction and found it undefended. The patrol saw lights in the woods they passed and could distinctly hear German-speaking voices. On October 24, Company A 378th Infantry sent out an eighteen man combat patrol under 1st Lt. Carlisle N. Plattner to raid "Ghost Woods" with the mission of capturing prisoners. Support was furnished by .50 caliber machine guns, 4.2 mortars, and 60-millimeter mortars; and Corps Artillery delivered diversionary fire. The woods, however, appeared to be a decoy area since the Germans directed mortar and automatic weapon fire against it when the American patrol was discovered.

The 377th Infantry sent out a series of patrols with the mission of crossing the Seille River to capture prisoners. The night of October 24-25 a 1st Battalion patrol reported that the Seille^o was overflowing its banks and was from 100 to 200 yards wide in their sector (this condition was a result not only of the recent heavy rains but also of the blowing up of several dams to the south). During the reconnaissance the patrol received machine gun fire and was unable to cross the river. A 2nd Battalion patrol reached the river after negotiating the muddy approach to it with considerable difficulty, but when the patrol made an attempt to launch a boat it drew rifle as well as machine gun fire and was forced to withdraw. The patrol moved to the southeast and again approached the Seille,^o but it was again driven off by machine gun fire. It was believed that the river would not be fordable at any point in the sector reconnoitered until it had returned to its normal channel, and this belief was confirmed by a Division Artillery liaison plane which reported that the Seille^o was wider than the Moselle at almost all points along the Division front.

Later in the month the Seille^o began to drop from its previous flood level, and further attempts were made to cross it. The night of October 29-30 a patrol using a pneumatic boat made the first crossing. A reconnaissance was made of a small area on the other side of the river but nothing was observed except old enemy diggings. The Seille^o continued to be unfordable; although it was now mostly contained in its normal channel, it was still eight to nine feet deep. The next night another patrol crossed the Seille^o and made a somewhat wider reconnaissance. The patrol found unoccupied slit trenches, foxholes and two boxes of enemy machine gun ammunition. No enemy were encountered, and no fire was received from the immediate area but there was long-range harassing fire from an undetermined source.

The Pagny Bridgehead

22-23 OCT. 44



During the period the 95th Division held the Pagny bridgehead, artillery action was limited by severe restrictions on the use of ammunition. According to an operations memorandum issued by Division October 19, the field artillery, after registering, might use regular ammunition only in the event of an actual counterattack: "This does not authorize firing in assembly areas where troops may be

forming for a counterattack but only when an actual counterattack is launched by the enemy with a force of the size of approximately a company."

Consequently the organic field artillery battalions of the Division were forced to restrict their firing to captured ammunition (nearly 700 rounds of captured Schneider 155-millimeter ammunition were fired against German positions while the Division held the Pagny bridgehead); the remainder of the firing was done by the tanks, tank destroyers, and 4.2 mortars under the control of the organic battalions.

Several time-on-target (TOT) missions were fired. On October 26, a TOT was directed against enemy concentrations in the Bois le Comte,^o a wooded area almost half a mile north of Vezon.^o A total of 81 weapons were used, firing a total of 267 rounds. Observers reported that the concentration was accurate, but a mist rising from the Moselle prevented any accurate estimate of the effects. The mission was repeated early the morning of October 27. On October 30 a TOT mission was fired against enemy installations in Sillegny,^o and extensive fires were started in the town.

October 27 Division Artillery cooperated in the first propaganda broadcast by the 95th Division. The broadcast was aimed at German troops in Corny, not far from the 379th lines. First the 360th Field Artillery Battalion directed a salvo against the town, and following this the Germans were told through the public address system that the Division knew that the 1st Company of the 53rd Machine Gun Battalion was in Corny. In addition, the Division knew that the Company's personnel was made up of stragglers picked up in the mass retreat, of men pulled out of hospitals before their wounds had completely healed, and of men who had been given only two or three weeks training before being put into the line. An accurate summary of world news was presented, and two artillery salvos punctuated the program. Then the Germans were told about America and about the treatment they would receive in prisoner-of-war camps. Again the artillery played its theme, this time with three salvos. Finally the Germans were told of the safe passage leaflets about to be fired and were given instructions for the use of them. The program was concluded with four artillery salvos by the 360th Field Artillery Battalion, interspersed with leaflets fired by the Cannon Company 379th Infantry. The immediate results of the broadcast were negative, but two men of the 53rd Machine Gun Battalion later surrendered to the 90th Division bearing some of the safe conduct passes fired at this time.

Only once during the bridgehead period did the Division receive air support. At 1000 October 22, fifteen 1,000 pound bombs were

dropped by 12 P-47's of the 509th Fighter Squadron on targets in the Division area. The targets were the towns of Magny,^o Marly,^o Cuvry^o and an ammunition dump in the Bois de Crepy.^o In all but one case fires were started.

As noted above, little trouble was caused by the civilians within the Division zone, and they were controlled by routine measures. On October 20 a number of refugees who had been moved from the east bank of the Moselle to Pagny^o by the 5th Division were moved from Pagny^o to Thiaucourt^o to escape German artillery fire. Civilians east of the Moselle were not allowed to leave their villages, and curfew was effective from 1900 to 0600. West of the Moselle, curfew began one hour later, and civilians might be issued special circulation passes allowing them to go one kilometer outside their towns of residence.

Toward the end of the bridgehead period on October 26 General Patton again visited the Division, going to each of the regimental command posts as well as to an observation post in the 377th Infantry zone. At the afternoon briefing of his staff, General Twaddle summarized the main points made by General Patton during his tour of the command posts.

"First of all, he does not want this Division to become too defensive minded. We will soon be an attack division. When and where, we don't know. But time and preparation for this are important elements. In offensive operations, he emphasized this and we must put it across to everyone in the Division, particularly the Infantry, we must now change some of the ideas we have had on the attack. Under General Patton's command we will use marching fire. We don't drop the moment we are fired on. We keep on going, firing as we advance. He has proved that the casualties are fewer by so doing, and the Heinie doesn't stick when he has that sort of fire directed upon him."

General Patton also re-emphasized the special points concerning marching fire which he had made at his first visit to the Division. These ideas were passed to the various units, and training in marching fire was given to the battalion in Division reserve. At the same time plans were made to have the reserve battalion undertake special training in the assault of fortifications; when a tank company was also in reserve, no platoon of the company was to cooperate in the training. A special area in the rear was set aside; ten flame-throwers were to be available; and one-half-pound blocks of TNT were to be exploded in connection with the training in the use of demolitions. The Division letter of instruction on the training declared: "Assault of a fortified position is primarily an infantry operation, but its suc-

cess is dependent upon a high degree of coordination with supporting weapons. The goal of this training is to train every infantryman to handle all special weapons normally employed by assault squads—flame-throwers, rocket launchers, demolitions and bangalore torpedoes.”

On October 30, after 10 days in position, the Division was ordered by Corps to return the Pagny^o bridgehead to the 5th Division; the 95th Division was to move north and to relieve the 90th Division along a line extending in an arc around the western perimeter of Metz and its suburbs from Uckange^o on the north to Gravelotte^o on the south. The movement and relief was begun October 31, and at 1330 November 1 General Twaddle relinquished the command of the Pagny bridgehead to the Commanding General of the 5th Division. At 1300 November 2 General Twaddle assumed command of the 90th Division zone before Metz. With these moves XX Corps approached the final rearrangement of its forces for the drive against the Metz salient and toward the Rhine.^{o1}

¹The following units were detached from the 95th Division at this time and remained in the bridgehead area: 735th Tank Battalion, the 284th Field Artillery Battalion, the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 773rd Tank Destroyer Battalion, Companies C and D 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion. As of 2400 November 2, the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion would be attached to the Division.

THE BEGINNING OF THE ATTACK ON METZ

November 2-14, 1944

PLANS AND PREPARATIONS

November 2-8

By November 2 the 95th Infantry Division had moved into position before Fortress Metz, and the tremendous strength of the German positions was evident even to a casual observer. The natural defenses of the city were formidable. The Moselle protected it on the north and west, and the Seille,^o a tributary of the Moselle, provided a water barrier to the east. On three sides, the sides in which the Germans were interested, there were steep hills which fell just short of attaining the dignity of mountains, and between the hills the valleys were narrow and twisting. And because the old border city of Metz had served as a garrison and fortress throughout its long history, the natural defenses had been improved by the best military minds of the successive powers that had controlled the city, from Imperial Rome to Nazi Germany.

The development of the modern complex of fortifications began in the sixteenth century with the construction of the ramparts and the citadel. In the seventeenth century, Vauban, the great siege expert of Louis XIV, supervised the building of further defensive works and in the nineteenth century Napoleon III strengthened Metz by the addition of a circle of detached forts. The city surrendered to the Germans in 1870, but it was reduced by investment and long siege and not by a direct assault of the fortifications. After 1870, the Germans further strengthened the outer circle of forts, and the Metz fortified area provided a pivot of maneuver for the von Schlieffen plan of 1914. During the First World War the city was never threatened. The French in the years between the wars improved and modernized the defenses and made additions which tied in the Metz forts with the Maginot Line^o which they built along a commanding ridge a few miles to the east. The Germans, reinheriting Metz after the collapse of the French armies in 1940, had little to do

to bring the defenses up to their own exacting standards. The Germans had concentrated on the western defenses, the French on the eastern, and in the end Metz was encircled by huge mutually supporting forts complete with disappearing guns, steel turrets, and tiers of underground passages leading to a honeycomb of bomb-proof barracks and storage chambers.

Despite its tremendous defensive strength, Metz might have been taken quickly and easily in the frantic September days when the Germans were falling back in disorganized retreat to the Siegfried line. On September 3 the Germans abandoned Metz, and it was only the failure of American supply systems which saved the city. On September 5 the Germans were able to return in force, and it was not until September 7 that the 5th Infantry Division launched the first attack against the new German defensive positions. During September and October the 90th Division bent back the German line north of Metz and the 5th Division crossed the Moselle to the south but the city itself with its ring of fortifications, the anchor and pivot of the whole German position, stood firm. Fortress Metz could still boast that for 1500 years it had never been taken by assault. Now, at the beginning of November, 1944 XX Corps was preparing for the attack which would finally eliminate Fortress Metz and destroy its tradition of inviolability.

An immediate frontal assault, as the attempt against Fort Driant had shown, would be futile. XX Corps, therefore, worked out a plan based on the classic principle of encirclement, employing three infantry divisions and an armored division. As initially planned, the 5th Infantry Division was to attack eastward out of the Pagny bridgehead^o south of Metz. The 90th Infantry Division was to force a crossing of the Moselle about 20 miles north of Metz at Koenigsmacher.^o The two infantry divisions were to swing wide and complete the encirclement of the city except for a narrow gap which was to be covered by artillery fire. The 10th Armored Division, crossing behind the 90th, would drive on toward the Saar "to seize intact, crossings over the river, from Merzig^o to the south."

The role of the 95th Division was to hold the broad front before Metz, to execute a feint at Uckange^o and Maizieres-les-Metz^o as an aid to the main effort, and to maintain constant pressure on the enemy, rapidly following up any withdrawal. Once the proposed encirclement had been completed, it was contemplated that the Division would increase this pressure on the enemy. The Germans would be forced to choose between surrender and flight through the narrow gap left open between the 5th and the 90th divisions. The Corps plan was to be extensively modified in execution, and the ultimate

part played by the 95th Division was to be vastly more important than that originally assigned to it. Nevertheless, the significance of the early moves in the battle of Metz cannot be grasped if this plan is not understood.

The 95th Division as noted above began its move from the Pagny bridgehead^o October 31, and the relief of the 90th Division was completed November 2. The Division was then drawn up in an arc to the west and northwest of Metz. On the north the Division was bounded by Task Force Polk, and the northernmost sector of the Division zone was held by Company A 377th Infantry in Uckange,^o Pepinville^o and Richemont. South of Company A was Task Force Rosoff (Capt. Martin Rosoff, commander of 377th Infantry's Anti-Tank Company), composed of the 95th Reconnaissance Troop, the 377th Infantry Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon and the 377th Infantry Anti-Tank Company. The 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry was in Maizieres and to the west was the 2nd Battalion. The 1st Battalion (less Company A) was in regimental reserve in the Bois de St. Hubert.^o

The 378th Infantry held an extended front in the center of the Division sector, facing part of the line of western forts. The 1st Battalion, to the north, was drawn up before a high ridge, the whole of which was heavily fortified. To the north was Fort de Feves,^o then the three Canrobert forts^o and finally Fort Amanvillers.^o The 3rd Battalion, in the southern portion of the regimental sector, faced the town of Amanvillers^o in the north and Fort de Guise in the south. To the rear of Amanvillers^o there were other fortifications, among them the tremendous Fort Lorraine.^o Between the 1st and 3rd battalions a sector was held by Company B 320th Engineer Battalion and a platoon of Company C 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry was located in Batilly^o and Jouaville,^o it was in Division reserve and available for employment by XX Corps outside the Division zone.

Of the 379th Infantry, only the 2nd Battalion was on the line. It was situated in the Gravelotte^o area, and to its immediate front were a series of mutually supporting fortifications including three misnamed "farms", St. Hubert Farm,^o Moscow Farm^o and Leipzig Farm.^o Behind these was the great fortress Jeanne d' Arc.^o The 1st and 3rd battalions were in assembly areas prepared to relieve the 10th Armored Division to the south on a line facing the forts known as the Seven Dwarfs^o (from north to south these were Forts St. Hubert,^o Jussy Nord,^o Jussy Sud,^o Bois de la Dame,^o Vaux Nord,^o Vaux Sud^o and Marival^o) and Fort Driant.^o

XX Corps had set November 8 as D-Day for the Metz operation.

However, the exact date remained "Top Secret" until the last moment, and for the 95th Division the period November 2 through 7 was one of patrolling, planning and waiting. The enemy's strength in the new sector was greater than it had been in the Pagny bridge-head, but the German attitude was still largely defensive and only the Maizieres-les-Metz area could be regarded as active. The Division Order of Battle Team estimated that approximately 8,000 enemy troops opposed the Division. This included the entire German 462nd Infantry Division and about half of the 19th Infantry Division. With few exceptions, the enemy forces consisted of second-grade personnel such as new recruits taken into the Wehrmacht from the navy and from the Luftwaffe air and ground personnel, convalescents, and the very old or very young. Because of the pressure of the Allied drive early in September, students of the German artillery officer candidate school and non-commissioned officer school at Metz were pushed into the line, and what remained of these men made up the bulk of the Germans' able troops. Leadership, however, both in the 462nd and 19th divisions, was thought to be excellent.

The mission of the 95th Division as stated in the Operations Instruction of October 31 was, "By aggressive patrolling contain the enemy in zone and prevent penetration of Corps position." Each of the regiments was given the order, "Patrol aggressively in zone. Combat patrols of sufficient strength to obtain prisoners." And at the Commanding General's regular afternoon briefing of his staff and unit liaison officers on November 3, he stated, "Front line units must be active and keep these Boche back. They can do so only through large combat patrols—killing the enemy or bringing him back. We want combat patrols and nothing else but combat patrols for the present."

The way in which the regiments carried out these orders is illustrated by the Division's patrol activity the night of November 3-4. Nine patrols were sent out; ten prisoners were taken, and it was estimated that at least three Germans were wounded and eight killed. The outstanding success was achieved by a patrol of one officer and 25 men from the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry. This combat patrol was led by Capt. (then second lieutenant) Herbert H. Hardy of Company G, and its objective was a German machine gun outpost.

The patrol left the Company G command post at 1900 with a mission of capturing prisoners and of eliminating the machine gun outpost. It moved to within a hundred yards of its objective without incident and then began to close in on the outpost, located in a two-story house, to the rear of which was a stable and what appeared to be a tool shed. At this time, four Germans came out of the house,

evidently with the mission of repairing the telephone wire which had been cut a few minutes earlier by the patrol. "They were about 35 yards from us," said Captain Hardy, "and we opened up with six B.A.R.s, shooting low so as only to wound the men and thus be able to take them as prisoners. We hit'em, all right, and knocked them behind a six-foot wall." The patrol's interpreter then called on the four to surrender but received no reply. Prearranged groups moved in and surrounded each of the three buildings. Captain Hardy threw home-made concussion grenades into the main building, and the interpreter again called for surrender without reply. With three others, Captain Hardy moved into the building for a hasty search, found one machine gun position but no weapon, and withdrew to make a careful search of the buildings' surroundings. Another machine gun position was found and also an observation post which had apparently been occupied a few minutes earlier.

Hardy and three men then returned to the main building for a detailed search and heard noises in one of the rooms. The interpreter called for surrender and, to the astonishment of the patrol, nine unarmed Germans immediately filed out of an adjacent room with raised hands. One of the prisoners, an aid man, said that two wounded men had been left in the room. Captain Hardy investigated cautiously and found the two lying on the floor. "They were probably two members of the wire crew we had fired at," Hardy said. "Both of them were covered with blood from the waist down and I didn't see how I could carry them out and back through our lines without endangering the whole patrol, so I decided to leave them there and get out as fast as possible because the Krauts had sent up a flare when we tossed our grenades." The patrol and the prisoners started back toward the Division lines, but the captured Germans excitedly pointed out that the field they were about to cross was mined (as had been suspected by the regimental S-2). The patrol returned by the same route used in moving out, arriving at the command post at 0030 November 4. "The men were overjoyed after we took the prisoners," declared Captain Hardy. "In fact, I was afraid they were a little too noisy, but we got back without having a casualty."

The 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry sent out a second combat patrol the same night, but no contact was made with the enemy. Three combat patrols were sent out by the regiment's 3rd Battalion. Two of these encountered no enemy. The third, consisting of one officer and 39 men, and led by Capt. Tom Pinckney (later killed in action), engaged the enemy in buildings about a mile and a half southwest of Maizieres.^o The patrol knocked out two enemy machine guns, killed

an estimated eight Germans and suffered five casualties. Two patrols were sent out by the 378th Infantry, but neither encountered any enemy. A 379th Infantry combat patrol of one officer and 26 men was given the mission of capturing prisoners and of making a reconnaissance in the vicinity of Leipzig Farm.^o One of the members of the patrol, coming upon a bunker, threw a grenade inside. Two Germans immediately came out of the bunker to surrender, and while one later escaped, he was believed to have been seriously wounded. A second combat patrol sent out by the 379th Regiment did not make contact with the enemy but came under fire from automatic weapons, mortars and artillery.

The night of November 3-4 was marked by German as well as American patrol activity. At 2300, Capt. Donnelly P. Bolton, commanding Company I 377th Infantry, learned that the telephone wire to one of his outposts had been cut. Captain Bolton was particularly anxious to repair the wire since another of his patrols was working forward of the outpost. He therefore formed a patrol from men then available in his command post to investigate and repair the wire. While advancing toward the outpost, the Company I men were ambushed by an enemy patrol and suffered seven casualties, including Captain Bolton and two of his officers.

The Division continued its policy of active patrolling right up to D-Day of the Metz operation. On the night of November 4-5, 11 combat patrols were dispatched; on the night of November 5-6, six combat patrols and eight reconnaissance patrols; and on the night of November 6-7, 11 combat and six reconnaissance patrols.

In addition, there were several special missions fired by units of Division Artillery. November 5, three TOT (Time on Target) concentrations were fired. At 1930 November 6, every weapon of the Division and Corps artillery fired simultaneously on known enemy positions, the simultaneous fire being intended to deceive German sound and flash instruments and to lessen the danger of accurate counter-battery fire. There were three major concentrations, one to the front of each regiment. In the 377th area the town of Seme-court^o was the target. The concentration to the front of the 378th zone was a quarry in which two enemy companies were known to mess daily between 1900 and 1930. Finally, the 379th target was Leipzig Farm,^o a fortified house known to be a center of German activity.

In general, however, the Division sector was quiet throughout this period. The German attitude remained defensive, and American patrols were intended primarily to keep the enemy off balance and to secure information. Nevertheless, Division and regimental staffs

were busy with plans for the coming offensive, and the men of the 95th knew that in the near future the Division would pass from the phase of active patrolling to one of large scale attack. The feeling of expectancy was heightened when the army commander, General Patton, made his third visit to the Division November 4.

General Patton was again accompanied by the XX Corps Commander, General Walker. As on his first visit, the army commander spoke to an audience consisting of all Division officers of field grade and of one officer and one non-commissioned officer representative from each company, battery and troop. General Patton again emphasized his doctrine of marching fire. "Here is my doctrine," he declared. "Violent, continuous attack implemented by continuous fire by all weapons." Of the future he said, "We will attack shortly, and it is highly undesirable that the enemy know of this . . . It is 132 miles to the Rhine from here, and if this army will attack with venom and desperate energy, it is more than probable that the war will end before we get to the Rhine. Therefore, when we attack, go like hell!"

Field Order No. 12 of the XX Corps, dated November 3, detailed the part to be played by the Victory Division in the Corps plan for the encirclement and destruction of the garrison of the Metz fortified area.¹ Six missions were assigned to the Division.

1. "On Corps order, relieve elements of the 10th Armored Division containing enemy bridgehead west of the Moselle River.

2. "In coordination with the 90th Infantry Division make a vigorous demonstration of crossing the Moselle River in the vicinity of Uckange, commencing at 1500 hours on D-Day and continuing for a minimum of fifteen hours. Troops will cross the Moselle River during this demonstration. Demonstration will build up and not be permitted to taper off until time of cessation.

3. "In conjunction with demonstration in the vicinity of Uckange, reduce enemy pocket east of Maizieres to the Moselle River; both efforts to be so coordinated as to create the indication of a major attack.

4. "Vigorously contain enemy within zone. Maintain constant pressure on enemy and rapidly followup and enemy withdrawal.

5. "On Corps order attack and seize the city of Metz.

6. "Be prepared on Corps order to assist the 5th Infantry Division in protection of the bridges over the Moselle River with one infantry

¹Attached to the Division were the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 547th Anti-Aircraft Artillery Battalion (less Battery C) and the 778th Tank Battalion. In support was the 193rd Field Artillery Group, which would reinforce the fires of Division Artillery.

battalion, motorized from the 95th Infantry Division transportation."

D-Day was 8 November 1944.

The initial missions assigned the Division reflect the relatively minor role which XX Corps planned for it in the early stages of the Metz offensive. The relief of elements of the 10th Armored Division was simply the last step in the rearrangement of Corps forces begun at the end of October. The 10th Armored Division was to be free to cross through the bridgehead which the 90th Division was to establish north of Metz at Koenigsmacher.^o Along the largest part of its sector, the mission of the 95th Division remained as before, vigorously to contain the enemy in zone. At two points the Division was to take offensive action, but in each case the purpose was to deceive the Germans as to the XX Corps plan rather than to capture objectives of great intrinsic importance. At Uckange the Division was to make a vigorous demonstration that involved crossing the Moselle. The Germans were to be led to believe, first, that the 90th Division remained in its old position and, second, that preparations were being made for an armored crossing at Uckange. In the vicinity of Maizieres the Division was to launch a limited objective attack, but was to conduct this attack in conjunction with the Uckange demonstration in such a way that the Germans would believe it to be the main attack against Metz.

Ultimately the 95th Division was to be given missions of far greater importance, and it was to take over the main effort in the assault of Metz. The 90th Division was not to be successful in its effort to provide a crossing for the armor at Koenigsmacher,^o and in consequence the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, in Division reserve, was to be called upon to establish a bridgehead at Thionville.^o The demonstration at Uckange,^o far from being a mere feint, was to be merged with the Thionville operation, and a 95th Division spearhead against Metz was to be mounted east of the Moselle. Finally, the 95th Division was not to hold off its attack on Metz until the encirclement by the 90th and 5th Division had been completed but was to begin its own assault against the main fortifications November 15.

The History of the 95th Division in the assault on Fortress Metz consequently falls into two main parts, the first from November 8 through November 14, and the second from November 15 to the fall of Metz. In the first period three operations are to be distinguished: 1. The limited objective attack on the Maizieres^o pocket. 2. The bridgehead at Uckange^o (Operation Casanova). 3. The Thionville^o bridgehead.

THE ATTACK ON THE MAIZIERES POCKET

In Field Order No. 2, 95th Division, dated 7 November, the first two operations were assigned to the 377th Infantry, and the 377 Infantry had assigned the limited objective attack on the Maizieres pocket to its 2nd and 3rd battalions, the crossing of the Moselle at Uckange to its 1st Battalion. The attack on the Maizieres pocket was given the following definition in the Field Order: "Launch limited objective attack at 2100 hours D-Day and reduce enemy pocket east of Maizieres to the Moselle River. Capture point 209.2, south slag pile, Brioux Chateau,^o Bois de Brioux,^o Bois Brule^o and Hauconcourt.^o Mop up and prevent enemy reoccupation of area west of Moselle River from Uckange^o to Hauconcourt,^o both inclusive." The regimental plan called for the 2nd Battalion to attack on the right with Hannibois Woods^o (which included the high ground at point 209.2) as its objective, and for the 3rd Battalion to attack on the left with the south slag pile and the area around Brioux Chateau^o as its first objectives.

These limited objective attacks met with little immediate success. Inexperienced troops were attempting one of the most difficult of operations, a night attack over unfavorable terrain. Artillery and mortars were zeroed in on the areas over which the troops would have to advance, and the enemy had the advantage not only of familiarity with the ground but also of the protection afforded by entrenchments and buildings. Finally the whole area was heavily mined and booby trapped.

The 2nd Battalion was assembled the evening of the attack in the woods known as Bois de l'Abbe,^o north of its objectives. Company E on the right was to seize Jaily Mill,^o and Company G on the left was to seize Fereau Mill.^o Company F, initially in reserve, was later to bypass Fereau^o Mill and proceed to the battalion objective at Hannibois Woods.^o Both the attacking companies jumped off at 2100, and Company E was able to get some of its men into Jaily^o Mill with little trouble. However, when the mill was outposted and the rest of the company was brought up, heavy casualties were caused by mines, some of which were so laid that the advance scout set off

whole series of mines to the rear with a single trip wire. Company G, on the left, ran into mines shortly after passing the line of departure, and progress was slow and control difficult as the men tried to work their way forward past minefields under intermittent mortar and artillery fire during an extremely dark night. Part of the 2nd platoon, under command of Lieutenant Mark Goodyear, succeeded in gaining entrance to one of the group of buildings forming Fereau Mill,^o but they were unable to advance farther. Later, additional elements of Company G and part of Company F succeeded in joining the 2nd platoon. During the night, the Germans counterattacked to dislodge the 2nd Battalion foothold, but they were beaten off and by dawn several other buildings of the group had been captured. At about the same time the rest of Companies G and F, together with a platoon of Company E, moved forward from the Bois de l'Abbe^o to Fereau Mill,^o and after a short fight the 2nd Battalion gained complete control.

Reorganization was quickly effected, and the attack renewed toward Hannibois Woods.^o Companies G and F, with the platoon of Company E, advanced using marching fire across the rising ground leading to the woods. The Germans were dug in at the railroad embankment at the edge of the woods, but the technique of marching fire proved effective and the positions were overrun. Several machine guns were captured, and by 1000 the battalion had taken its objective and reached the far edge of the woods. However, accurate German artillery and mortar fire gradually made it clear that the objective could not be held, and at 1340 General Twaddle directed the regimental commander Colonel Fred E. Gaillard to withdraw the 2nd Battalion from Hannibois Woods^o if he thought it advisable. By 1530 the 2nd Battalion had pulled back to its original assembly area in the Bois de l'Abbe,^o except that a platoon of Company E continued to hold Jaily Mill. During the next night, November 9-10, the Germans directed a counterattack against Fereau Mill, unaware that the 2nd Battalion had withdrawn from it. Artillery and tank destroyer fire was successfully placed on the counterattacking force, but the enemy had time to set fire to the mill before withdrawing.

Meanwhile the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry had attacked at the same time as the 2nd Battalion, at 2100 November 8. On the right, Company K attacked the south slag pile, and on the left, Company I attacked Chateau Brieux; Company L was in reserve. Both the attacking companies met with initial difficulties, but both succeeded in taking their objectives the next day. Company K jumped off at 2100 with the 1st and 2nd platoons moving against the slag pile; the 3rd platoon was initially in reserve and when the slag pile had been

taken, it was to attack a group of houses to the west, known to the company as Victory Village (Nouvelle Colonie). The platoons attacking the slag pile ran into mines in the approach, and it was difficult to maintain organization in the blackness. Nevertheless, they reached the pile and attempted to work their way up its sides. The Germans had well dug-in positions, and heavy casualties were inflicted on the attacking force. Two small groups succeeded in reaching the top of the slag pile and in maintaining themselves there during part of the night. However, when it became clear that reinforcements would not reach them, they were compelled to withdraw. Meanwhile, the 3rd Platoon had advanced through difficult minefields to the outskirts of Victory Village;^o here they waited until dawn to determine the outcome of the fight for the slag pile. When it became evident that the Germans still held it, a quick change in plans was made; the platoon reversed itself and attacked the slag pile. The Germans were apparently caught by surprise at this attack from an unexpected quarter, and the platoon drove off a force far superior in numbers. But the Germans soon reorganized and began a move to encircle the slag pile and to cut off the 3rd Platoon attacking force. Again it was necessary to withdraw, and this was accomplished under the cover of an extremely heavy barrage laid down by the mortars of Company K. At noon of November 9, Company K (reinforced with elements of the reserve Company L) again and for the last time attacked the slag pile. A heavy artillery preparation was placed on the slag pile, a rolling barrage preceded the advance, and heavy fires were used to neutralize German positions, particularly those in Victory Village.^o After furious hand-to-hand fighting the slag pile was finally seized by 1400, and by evening Company K had organized defensive positions on it. Company K remained here until November 12 when it was relieved by Company G after a change of boundary gave the slag pile to the 2nd Battalion.

Company I had also attacked at 2100 November 8 with Brioux Chateau^o as its objective. Shortly after it had left its line of departure, a German machine gun outpost was encountered and eliminated. Alerted by the fire-fight, the Germans directed heavy mortar and artillery concentrations on the company; in addition, the advance elements found their progress impeded by extensive minefields similar to those which had been found by the other attacking units of the 377th Infantry. Some elements of Company I reached the chateau, which was protected by a deep moat, but they found that although American artillery had virtually destroyed the buildings, the enemy still occupied excellent defensive positions with strongly emplaced automatic weapons. Consequently, the advance elements were forced to

withdraw and, as in the case of Company K, the company mortars provided the bulk of the covering fire. The entire company was then pulled back for reorganization, and on November 9 it was ordered to hold up until the outcome of the fight for the slag pile was known. After the slag pile had been taken, Company I again prepared to attack and jumped off at 1545. Heavier artillery preparations and stronger supporting fires were employed, and the leading elements of the company successfully assaulted the chateau. A few prisoners were taken, but the bulk of the defending force was able to make good its escape through the intricate system of entrenchments leading into Brieux Woods.^o Only a small part of Company I reached the chateau November 9, and during the night the Germans counter-attacked in an attempt to win it back before reinforcements should arrive. The counterattack was repulsed, and during the morning of November 10 the remainder of the company moved up and organized defensive positions about the chateau. Here they remained until the beginning of the main attack on Metz November 15 although the Germans on the night of November 10-11 blew out the banks of the canal (Canal des Mines) east of the chateau and flooded not only the surrounding country but also part of the chateau itself.

It had originally been planned that Company L would attack the third objective of the 3rd Battalion, Hauconcourt,^o the morning of November 9, but the slow progress made by the other companies resulted in a postponement until November 10. By that time the rising Moselle had flooded the town to an extent which made the attack impossible, and in a short time the Germans themselves were forced by the rising waters to withdraw from Hauconcourt.^o On November 13 and 14 Company L occupied without opposition several houses on the road from Maizieres^o to Hauconcourt.^o

Despite the absence of complete success, valuable results had been achieved by these operations against the Maizieres^o pocket. The first steps had been taken in flanking the great series of western fortifications, and the way had been prepared for the assault of November 15. Particular emphasis should be placed on the possession of the slag pile, since it gave to the Division and denied to the enemy an important point of observation at a crucial sector of the front.

THE BRIDGEHEAD AT UCKANGE°— OPERATION CASANOVA

The second operation of the period from November 8 through November 14 was the establishment of the Uckange° bridgehead (Operation Casanova). Like the attack on the Maizieres pocket, this was essentially a deceptive move. The Germans were to believe, first, that the 90th Division remained in position and that it was forcing a main effort crossing at Uckange° and, second, that the crossing was to be used by an armored division. To lead the Germans to believe that the 90th Division was involved, the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry had taken off 95th Division insignia and, where possible, had substituted those of the 90th Division. To give the impression that an armored division was to use the crossing, a deception team from the Third Army as well as two platoons of tanks from the 10th Armored Division had been employed. For a week, the deception team, using special sound equipment and considerable ingenuity, had been simulating the assembly of armored units, and when the tanks arrived they were used for the same purpose.

Originally it had been planned to have the feint consist merely of a vigorous demonstration. On November 7, however, the Corps Commander directed that this be changed to a reconnaissance in force and that a forced river crossing be executed. It was planned that the 1st Battalion would cross one company, make a limited objective attack and withdraw. Finally and at the last minute a second change was made: the entire 1st Battalion would cross the flooded Moselle, a bridgehead would be established and maintained and the battalion would be prepared to attack south on order. The task set for the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry Regiment was not an easy one. It was to cross a river in high flood stage and it was to make a landing against a defended east bank—and all this was to be accomplished at a point at which a deception unit had engaged for a week in an effort to convince the Germans that a major effort was to be made.

A number of additional units had been attached to the 377th In-

• infantry or placed in support for the crossing and bridging operation. Besides the usual attachment of Company A of the 320th Engineer Battalion, Company B 135th Engineer Battalion would construct a footbridge, operate two infantry support rafts and together with the 991st Treadway Bridge Company would construct a treadway bridge. Finally, the 3rd Platoon of Battery A 547th A.A.A. Battalion was to provide bridge protection.

The active phase of Operation Casanova began at 1830 November 8 when a detachment of Company A 320th Engineer Battalion crossed the Moselle in assault boats at a point immediately south of Uckange. When the engineers reached the east bank, they put bangalore torpedoes into position and blew a gap approximately 160 yards wide in the enemy wire and minefield. The detachment returned by 2100 without casualties, but the explosions had alerted the Germans, already on guard after a week of armored division sound effects; heavy concentrations of artillery and mortar fire began to fall on the crossing and bridging site. Nevertheless, Company C of the 1st Battalion pushed off in the first assault wave at 2100, and within half an hour the entire company had crossed. The company worked its way inland about 400 yards, put out security and waited for daylight. They had come under light artillery and mortar fire, but the bulk of this fire was directed at the crossing sites and the greater part of the Company C losses were caused by mines rather than by artillery.

In the meantime, men of the supporting 135th Engineer Battalion had begun the construction of a footbridge and of two infantry support rafts, but German artillery fire of remarkable accuracy was directed against them. Three sections of the footbridge were knocked out as soon as they had been completed, and one of the infantry support rafts was destroyed. Up to this point, the engineers had suffered approximately 20 casualties and work was temporarily halted. Several later attempts were made the night of November 8-9 to continue construction of the footbridge, but in every instance accurate artillery made progress impossible. Reconnaissance was made for a new site, and a possible location was found some 600 yards upstream.

During the night, Company C of the 160th Engineer Battalion arrived to support the crossing operations. At 0430 they began to cross Company B and one platoon of Company D in assault boats, and by 0600 all were on the east side of the Moselle. They moved inland past Company C to the high wooded ground south of Imeldange and there organized for defense. A small combat patrol was directed against them later in the morning, but it was quickly repulsed and nine of its eleven members killed. On November 10 the rising

Moselle flooded the Company C area, and they were forced to move to new positions on line with Company B.

Meanwhile the engineers had continued their attempts to bridge the Moselle throughout the night of November 8-9 and during the next morning. However, the flood stage of the Moselle and continued German artillery frustrated their efforts. Accordingly, at 0830, the Corps Commander directed that no attempt be made to emplace the treadway bridge, and released to Corps control the 991st Treadway Bridge Company and Company B 135th Engineer Battalion. At the same time, Lt. Col. Joseph F. Decker, commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, was directed to hold up on the crossing of the remainder of the battalion. But in the course of the day, the Uckange bridgehead gained in importance for the Corps and Army plans, and at 1500 November 9 General Walker, the Corps Commander, ordered that the entire battalion be crossed east of the Moselle at the latest the night of November 10-11.

During the day of November 9, the engineers continued their reconnaissance under cover of a smoke screen which had been maintained since early morning by a section of the 161st Chemical Smoke Generator Company. It soon became clear that no bridge could be constructed until the Moselle receded, and plans were changed to provide for the construction of a trail ferry. Meanwhile, supply and evacuation could be accomplished only by assault boats, and it became more and more difficult for these to negotiate the swift current. During the night, storm boats were rushed up to meet the emergency, but the outboard motors failed to function and it was necessary to withdraw them for overhauling.

By November 10 the Moselle had reached its highest flood stage in 29 years, and at some points it was almost a mile wide. On the east side of the river the water reached the outskirts of Bertrange, normally a thousand yards from the bank, and it has already mentioned that on the west side of the river Hlaucourt, originally an objective of the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry, had been flooded. Assault boats could no longer be used at all, and the storm boats made the crossing with difficulty. A site for the trail ferry had been located south of Uckange, and the engineers, working in driving rain and harassed by artillery and small arms fire, made repeated attempts to tow a cable across the river. Their unsuccessful efforts continued through the night until all the storm boats were out of order and it was again necessary to overhaul them.

During the day of November 10, temporary and somewhat unusual liaison with the enemy was made in the Uckange area. A group of five 1st Battalion Medical Section men, two engineers and a rifle-

man supposed to be resting from earlier combat, all unarmed and wearing medical brassards, were crossing the swollen Moselle to aid wounded men of the bridgehead group. Their small boat, marked with the Geneva non-combatant cross, was swept a thousand yards downstream by the swift current. When they finally succeeded in landing the boat on the east bank, Sgt. Ervin Bluhm and one of his crew climbed ashore and found a foxhole with two Germans in it. The Germans, who spoke English well enough to make themselves understood, almost cordially directed the aidmen upstream to the place where they could find their own man. Still uncertain, however, the medics returned to the west bank and were again given directions by the 1st Battalion commander. They then recrossed the Moselle, went ashore once more, and to their amazement again encountered Germans. This time, an enemy officer and several enlisted men confronted the group from the 377th Infantry. Bluhm, undaunted, saluted the officer and to his surprise, received an American-type salute in return. The officer, who spoke and understood English, explained that there were no American troops in the area, that one wounded American was being cared for by the Germans, and that the aid party could reach American troops only by taking to the river again. On the third try Bluhm and his crew landed in the right sector and accomplished their mission.

Under the flood conditions described earlier, it proved impossible to carry out the directive that the entire battalion should be crossed the night of November 10-11, and Companies B and C, with a platoon of Company D, remained isolated on the east bank. Not only was it impossible to send them reinforcements, but since the enemy had infiltrated between the bridgehead force and the river it was also impossible to carry on supply and evacuation through normal channels. Because of the weather and because of the urgent need for planes elsewhere on the front, dropping of supplies by parachutes from troop carrier planes was impracticable. Consequently, it was decided to drop supplies from the Division's artillery liaison planes. A plan was worked out, and the commander on the east bank selected as dropping ground a clearing backed by a stretch of woods relatively distant from the enemy lines. This clearing was marked by panels so that the planes might easily locate it. Planes were fitted with no special equipment, and the assistant in the observer's seat carried the supplies in his lap. The pilot came in low, found the dropping ground and then made a climbing turn away from the trees. The assistant, opening the door, pitched the supplies into the trees to reduce the force of the fall. A load of 100 pounds was found practical with the L-4.

The results were highly satisfactory, and the great majority of the loads hit the dropping ground accurately and were recovered by our troops. Since the planes flew low, they were undiscovered until it was too late for any serious enemy reaction. On November 10, ten L-4s (including three from supporting Corps artillery) flew 104 sorties, averaging ten minutes per sortie, and dropped the following items to the bridgehead troops: 1,080 "K" rations, 46,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 4,000 rounds of caliber 50 ammunition, two boxes of medical supplies, two sacks of cigarettes, 200 bottles of Halazone tablets, 1 sack of toilet paper, 1 sack of gum, matches and candy, "D" rations and several bottles of blood plasma.

November 11, six L-4s flew 45 sorties and dropped the following items: two boxes of medical supplies, two bags of plasma, 10,000 cigarettes, four blanket sets, 300 pairs of socks, 150 pairs of gloves, 340 sleeping bags, 70 batteries, two radio sets, 600 heat units, two bottles of medical cognac, 30 rounds of 60mm mortar ammunition, 20,000 rounds of small arms ammunition and 70 blankets. The dropping of the mortar rounds November 11 was something of an innovation. To test its safety, a liaison plane dropped several rounds on the German held town of Bertrange^o as an experiment. None of the rounds were detonated, and it was felt safe to drop the ammunition near American troops.

In addition to the practical benefits, the isolated units of the bridgehead received a valuable boost in morale from the surprising appearance of their own artillery planes as cargo carriers. "The troops were really happy when the first plane came over dropping supplies," one of the pilots reported. "We could see right down into their fox-holes, and they looked hungry, wet and cold, but they were smiling when we saw them." And the experience gained in this first "Red Ball Airway Express" would be used to help other isolated units of the 95th Division in a few days.

Meanwhile, though the troops of the bridgehead force were receiving considerable mortar and artillery fire, their position remained generally static. During the night of November 11-12 the swollen Moselle began to recede, and plans were immediately prepared to send reinforcements by crossing the remainder of the battalion. The engineers continued their effort to construct a trail ferry, this time at a point where a high tension line, whose towers were still standing, had formerly crossed the river. Nevertheless, German artillery and mortar concentrations made the work both slow and costly. Late the afternoon of November 12, it again became possible to use assault boats, and plans were made to use these for crossing the rest of the 1st Battalion the night of November 12-13.



Once across, the battalion, in accord with Division Operations Instruction No. 5 issued November 12, was to launch an attack. The first two objectives were the towns of Bertrange^o and Imeldange^o and the final objective was a wooded area to the north of these two towns and including the village of Illange^o. After taking these objectives, the battalion was to make contact with the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry. The 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, in an operation which was the Division's third main action before the final assault on Metz, had crossed the Moselle at Thionville the morning of November 11 and had successfully established and expanded a bridgehead there.

The crossing of the remainder of the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry was accomplished with success by the 320th Engineer Battalion. While the crossing was being effected, Company B of the engineers made a feint at a point to the south of Uckange^o using outboard motors so as to draw enemy fire away from the infantry movement. Meanwhile, the crossing at Uckange^o was made with assault boats. The first wave pushed off at 0515 November 13, and by 0630 the whole battalion, with minor exceptions, was on the east side of the Moselle.

Company A launched an attack against Bertrange^o at daybreak; by 0800 the town had been taken and 31 prisoners captured. Company A then continued the attack toward Imeldange^o and it was planned that Company B, of the original bridgehead force, would support the attack. By noon Imeldange^o had been cleared of enemy, and contact had been made between Companies A and B. The battalion then reorganized, and preparations were made to attack the final objective the next morning. Company C moved into Bertrange^o, Company B completed its move to Imeldange^o and Company A was partly in Imeldange^o and partly in position at the roadblocks surrounding the town. The reorganization was slow and difficult, particularly for the units which had been isolated east of the Moselle since November 10. Not only were there battle casualties to be cared for, but there were also many serious cases of immersion and trench foot for whom walking was almost impossible.

At dusk, when the reorganization was almost completed, the Germans struck at the Uckange^o bridgehead with a hard-hitting counter-attack of armor and infantry: eight armored vehicles were employed and an estimated 200 riflemen. The enemy column entered the battalion area from the east, broke through the security at Imeldange, and continued the attack down the main street of the town. Several half-tracks passed through Imeldange^o and directed harassing fire on Bertrange^o. The 1st Battalion was consequently split, and the

Germans gained control of the north-south road between Bertrange and Imeldange.

The main force of the initial attack was directed against Companies A and B in Imeldange.^o Infantry followed the armor into town, and the Germans attempted a systematic destruction of the houses occupied by the 1st Battalion troops. Their direct fire and dual-purpose weapons blasted the buildings, and if this was not sufficient, the accompanying infantry burned them. No exact account of the attack on Imeldange^o can be written, but the general course of events is clear. The force of the German assault broke the communications between the American units, and resistance was maintained by small groups defending a single building or group of buildings. The Germans worked their way through Imeldange^o from east to west in bitter house-to-house fighting, and the 1st Battalion troops were driven out of one position after another until they eventually held little more than a large barn with its connected buildings. This had originally been a temporary evacuation point and aid station. It was later occupied by Capt. Kenneth V. Lockwood, Company D commander, with the remnants of two heavy machine gun sections, and these were joined by several small groups from Companies A and B who had been forced to abandon the buildings they had first defended. The Germans surrounded the barn, assaulted it without success, and at last tried to burn it. Nevertheless, the defenders continued to resist. Radio communication was maintained with the artillery, and accurate fire harassed the German efforts to take the barn. The fighting continued through November 14, and it was not until November 15 that relief finally reached the small force still holding out in Imeldange.^o

An interesting sidelight of the German attack on Imeldange^o was furnished by a free-talking officer captured by the 90th Division November 17 in the vicinity of Metzervisse,^o north of the 95th Division zone. He declared that the 1st Battalion troops in Imeldange^o fought bitterly until their ammunition gave out and were so exhausted that many of them fell asleep during their interrogation by German intelligence officers. Nevertheless, they steadfastly refused to give any information, which led to the following comment by the enemy regimental commander: "If my men were to act this way as prisoners I should be very satisfied."

The German attack against Bertrange^o was not as aggressive as that against Imeldange. When the half-tracks opened fire on the town, Capt. Edgar T. Savidge, Company C commander, quickly organized a perimeter defense. Some time later, approximately 50 enemy infantry men joined the vehicles and an attack on Bertrange^o

was begun. However, the infantry force was quickly scattered by fire from Company D heavy machine guns. The Germans abandoned the attack and began to encircle the town; by morning it had been almost completely surrounded and the communications between Bertrange^o and the river had been broken. During the night, the Germans sent a tracked vehicle and a tank into Bertrange^o to fire on the houses occupied by the Americans. The half-track was knocked out by bazooka fire and the tank finally withdrew.

Consequently, on November 14 the 1st Battalion bridgehead force had been split, and both Bertrange^o and Imeldange^o were surrounded by the enemy; the Germans had control of the ground between Bertrange and the Moselle and contact was broken between the 1st Battalion and the remainder of the regiment west of the river. During the afternoon, supplies were sent across the Moselle and left with a guard on the east bank, but the 1st Battalion forces in Bertrange were not able to pick them up. In the evening, Colonel Gaillard reported that from the best information available to him he believed the situation of the 1st Battalion to be desperate. Plans were being made to send a patrol of 50 men across the river as reinforcements, but it was also hoped that some outside aid could be obtained. The patrol, which included 10 bazooka teams for use against enemy armor, crossed the Moselle the night of November 14-15. One entire boat load was lost when their assault boat capsized, but the remainder were able to make their way to Bertrange.^o Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, which was driving south from Thionville^o toward the Uckange^o bridgehead, was directed to effect the relief of the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry as soon as possible and on the afternoon of November 15 contact was made with the 1st Battalion forces in both Bertrange^o and Imeldange.^o Orders were immediately given for the 1st Battalion to reorganize and to prepare to drive south toward Metz as a part of Task Force Bacon.

The full story of this relief will appear in the history of the Thionville^o bridgehead operation and of Task Force Bacon. At 2345 November 15, Col. Robert L. Bacon, commanding Task Force Bacon, reported the following strength figures for the rifle companies of the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry: (It will be remembered that the normal strength of a rifle company is over 180.)

Company A: One officer and 42 enlisted men.

Company B: One officer and 39 enlisted men.

Company C: Four officers and 107 enlisted men.

The figures speak for themselves on the price the 1st Battalion had paid for Operation Casanova. The results were less tangible, but it is clear that the 1st Battalion 377th had made a contribution to the

overall success of the Metz operation. They had drawn a large percentage of German artillery fire to the Uckange^o area, and thus made easier the crossing of the 90th Division at Koenigsmacher^o and of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry at Thionville. In addition, they had forced the Germans to expend armor and infantry in a futile attempt to wipe out the Uckange bridgehead; they had held their ground against this counterattack and on November 16 they pushed aggressively south with Task Force Bacon and were to play an important part in the final assault on Metz.

THE THIONVILLE BRIDGEHEAD

The activity of the 95th Division during the initial phase of the assault on Fortress Metz, from November 8 through November 14, included three offensive operations. The two operations originally assigned to the Division by XX Corps have already been described: the limited objective attack on the Maizieres^o pocket and the Uckange bridgehead. The third, the Thionville^o operation, was not originally a part of the Corps plan and to understand its significance the development of the Corps effort must be understood.

The Corps plan, it will be remembered, called for the encirclement of Metz by the 5th Infantry Division from the south and by the 90th Infantry Division from the north. The 10th Armored Division was to cross through the bridgehead established by the 90th Division and drive east. To the south, where the 5th Division could make use of a bridgehead established earlier, progress had been satisfactory. To the north, however, the flooded Moselle threatened to disrupt the Corps plan. At Koenigsmacher,^o the 90th Division had succeeded in crossing the foot elements of its three regiments, but it had proved impossible to establish a bridge in the face of rising water and determined German opposition. The Corps plan for the encirclement of Metz stood in jeopardy unless the 10th Armored Division could be crossed and committed without delay.

On Corps order, therefore, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry which was in Division reserve and motorized for rapid movement at Batilly,^o 10 miles northwest of Metz, was ordered the afternoon of November 10 to race 22 miles north to Thionville^o and there force a crossing. The choice of this alternative crossing site was dictated by the condition of the Moselle. Out of the regular channel for most of its course and now almost a mile wide at Uckange,^o south of Thionville^o the river had high banks and was contained within them. It was at this point, consequently, that the 2nd Battalion was ordered to cross, despite the fact that it would have to land under the guns of Forts Yutz^o and d'Illange^o on the east bank. In its original order, Corps directed that the battalion send strong patrols across the Moselle in the vicinity of Thionville^o to determine the feasibility of bridge con-

struction in that area for the immediate crossing of the 10th Armored Division. When the reconnaissance had been completed, the battalion forces were to be withdrawn to the west bank of the river to await instructions.

The 2nd Battalion had been alerted at 1515, and at 2000 the movement from Batilly^o to Thionville^o was begun. There had been no previous reconnaissance and the trip over winding unfamiliar roads in blackout was a difficult one; six two-and-one-half ton trucks overturned en route. Nevertheless, at 0330 November 11, the battalion closed into an assembly area in the vicinity of Thionville.^o XX Corps had directed the 1306th Engineer Group to provide assault boats, and the crossing was to be begun as soon as the boats arrived. There was no time for a reconnaissance of the crossing site by the 2nd Battalion commander, and Lt. Col. Autrey J. Maroun accepted the recommendation of officers of the 1306th Engineer Group who had been over the ground previously.

At 0400 Lt. Colonel Maroun assembled his company commanders and issued his order. Company E was to make the initial crossing followed by Company F and the time, based on the prospective arrival of the boats, was set at 0830. The machine guns of Company H and the light machine guns of the rifle companies were to be emplaced on the west bank to support the crossing. At 0530 the company commander and platoon leaders of Company E proceeded to an observation post near the river from which they studied the terrain and saw for the first time Fort Yutz,^o whose guns commanded the Moselle at Thionville.^o Meanwhile, guides were taking Company E to a forward assembly area and at 0600 Company F began its movement forward.

The first boat was launched at 0830. Both it and the following boat, though they crossed in sight of German positions on the east side of the Moselle, landed before a shot was fired. The third boat drew machine gun fire from a pillbox 100 yards south of the landing site. While men from the first boats moved to neutralize this pillbox, four more boats crossed under the fire of its machine gun. Heavy artillery and mortar fire, both of which were to continue throughout the crossing operation, began to fall on the launching and landing sites and two squads of Germans directed machine gun and rifle fire on the assault boats and on the landing site from the south roundhouse of a nearby railroad yard.

By 1010, 144 men of Company E had crossed the river despite the increasing artillery fire. The element of surprise by this time had been completely lost and casualties were mounting. As a result, only one platoon of Company F was able to cross before dark to join

Company E. During the day, the troops who had crossed the river cleared part of the island between the Moselle and the canal which surrounds the section of Thionville^o east of the river, and an engineer reconnaissance was made of the eastern terminus of the proposed bridge. Meanwhile, in the morning, Corps had expanded the original mission assigned to the 2nd Battalion. The entire battalion was to cross the river, seize a bridgehead and push on to the high ground to the east, and it was to continue its advance until the bridge site was secure from direct fire.

During the night of November 11-12, four storm boats were pressed into service to cross the remainder of Company F under cover of darkness and to evacuate casualties from the east bank. An attempt was made to take across five assault boats to be used in crossing the canal, but the swift current of the swollen Moselle swept the boats downstream and destroyed them. Forty additional assault boats were brought forward during the night and were used to cross Companies G and H at dawn November 12. The first wave pushed off at 0630; by 0715 Company G was completely across, and by 0830 Company H had closed in on the east bank.

Meanwhile the troops who had crossed earlier had already planned and begun a continuation of the attack. During the night of November 11-12, patrols from Company F had located two bridges across the moat that surrounded Fort Yutz,^o and the company plan of attack called for a simultaneous assault on both these bridges. The 2nd platoon was to storm the south bridge. The 3rd platoon was to reduce the two pillboxes and the bunker which guarded the north bridge and then seize the bridge itself. The 1st platoon was to move along the causeway and prepare to exploit the first entrance gained. A half-hour artillery preparation by Corps artillery battalions emplaced to the northwest was to precede the attack.

The attack was executed as planned at 0700. The 2nd platoon surprised the enemy guards on the south bridge by the suddenness of its assault, killing 11 men and capturing one, and by 0800 it had entered the southwest portion of Fort Yutz.^o The platoon encountered heavy mortar fire as it crossed the moat and it faced a hail of small arms fire from the southwest barracks of the fort as it entered the gates. In the meantime, the 3rd platoon had captured both pillboxes guarding the north bridge, killing the eight occupants of one and capturing the five who occupied the other. The fire-fight preceding the reduction of the pillboxes cost the platoon whatever element of surprise it might have had, and it came under heavy mortar and artillery fire before it finished mopping up these positions. As it turned toward the bridge, it came under fire from three machine guns

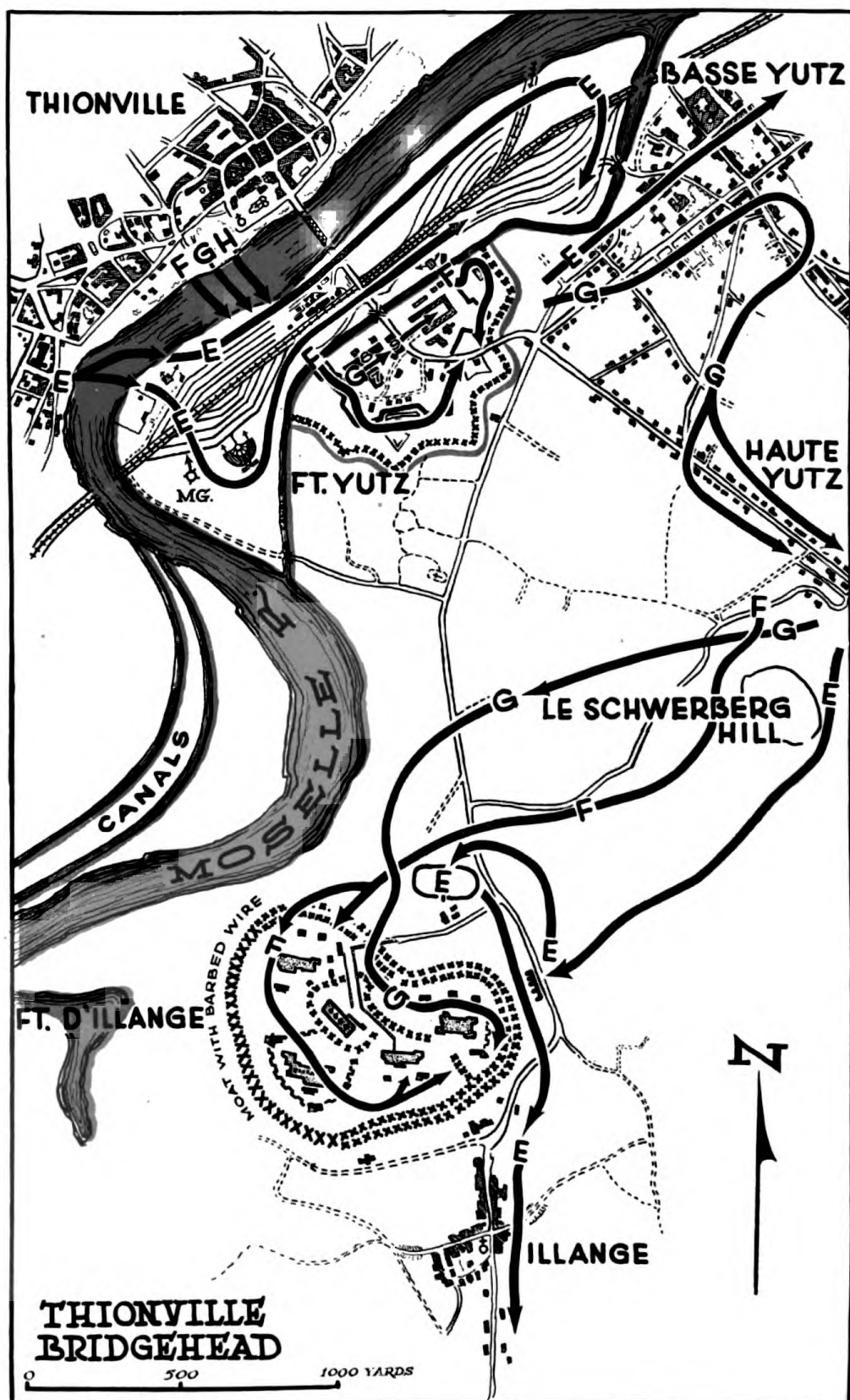
in the northwest barracks and from riflemen firing from dug-in positions on top of the bunker as well as from the upper windows of the barracks. Finally, there was a steel door at the end of the bridge which would have to be blown. The platoon had already suffered 20 casualties in its assault against the pillboxes and the platoon leader halted to reorganize.

At 0815 the 2nd platoon, which had crossed the south bridge, reported the enemy was moving on its right in an effort to counter-attack. Accordingly, the 3rd platoon of Company G moved over the bridge and swung south and east to hit the counterattacking force of 50 Germans in the flank. The platoon's cross fire cost the enemy 20 casualties in killed or wounded, another 12 were captured and the remainder withdrew.

The 2nd platoon of Company F and the 3rd platoon of Company G resumed the attack, but came under extremely heavy machine gun fire from a nearby bunker. A squad from the 2nd platoon attempted to flank the bunker from the right, but it was caught in a mortar concentration and eleven of the squad were casualties. The depleted 2nd platoon of Company F then turned to attack the southwest barracks. It gained its objective and burned the building. The 3rd platoon of Company G, despite heavy casualties, had assaulted and captured buildings Nos. 7, 8 and 9 by 1500. When building No. 9 had been captured, the 2nd platoon of Company G entered it and launched an attack against the barracks across the road to the north. Machine gun fire sweeping the road forced them to abandon the attack.

Meanwhile, the 3rd platoon of Company F, which had captured the pillboxes at the north bridge, was joined by the company's 1st platoon and at 1300 launched an attack across the bridge. Despite the fire from four enemy machine guns and from numerous riflemen, the two platoons managed to enter the fort at 1400. Thirty Germans retired from their defensive positions in the face of this attack and holed up in a cellar of a near-by building. They were still there when the building was occupied during the night and beehive charges were set off on the floor over their heads.

The morning of November 12, the 90th Infantry Division had received a counterattack in their bridgehead to the north by a force estimated at one infantry regiment supported by armor. In consequence, the Thionville^o operation became even more important to the Corps effort. At 1005, Major General Walton H. Walker,^o commanding the XX Corps, directed supporting engineers to begin construction of a Bailey bridge at Thionville^o immediately regardless



of casualties, and at the same time he directed Lt. Colonel Maroun^o to push the infantry advance as much as possible.

These directives were reflected in the 95th Division Operations Instruction No. 5, issued the afternoon of November 12. The 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, was to "Continue attack aggressively and seize and hold first (Fort Yutz),^o second (Basse-Yutz) and final (Haute-Yutz, the hill to the south and Fort d'Illange^o) objectives." This operations instruction also initiated the steps which were to lead to the eventual fusion of the Thionville and Uckange operations. The final objectives of the two battalions involved (2nd Battalion 378th and 1st Battalion 377th) were adjacent, and the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry was directed to support with fire the attack of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry on its final objective.

By the evening of November 12 the 2nd Battalion was firmly established in part of Fort Yutz^o and plans were made to finish the job the next day. During the night, supplies were brought across the Moselle and the wounded evacuated in assault boats, despite continuing mortar and artillery fire. The mopping up of Fort Yutz^o was assigned to Company F, to which the 2nd and 3rd platoons of Company G were attached. The final attack was launched at 0700 November 13. The 1st and 2nd platoons of Company F attacked north of the main road through the fort, the remainder of the force to the south of this road. The assault was met with scattered small arms fire and by some artillery fire from Fort d'Illange,^o but resistance was comparatively light. By 1200 Fort Yutz^o had been cleared of all German resistance. Sixteen of the enemy had been killed or wounded and 56 were captured. From these prisoners it was learned that the bulk of the garrison had withdrawn during the night.

With the capture of Fort Yutz,^o the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry had accomplished its original bridgehead mission. It had demonstrated the possibility of establishing a bridge at Thionville,^o and it had cleared the crossing site of direct fire so that construction could begin immediately. The entire crossing area was still under mortar and artillery fire, however, and in accord with the XX Corps directive, plans were made to expand the bridgehead immediately. Accordingly, Companies E and G pushed out to secure the town of Basse-Yutz,^o while Company F remained in the fort. No opposition was encountered, and it was found that the enemy had withdrawn from the town. The position was consequently organized for a defense of the bridgehead against counterattack, and the night of November 13-14 Company E occupied the north portion of Basse-Yutz^o and Company G the south portion. During the night, elements of Company E made contact with reconnaissance troops of the 90th

Division to the north. It was, consequently, clear that the German withdrawal from Fort Yutz^o had been to the south.

To complete the mission of securing the bridgehead from artillery and mortar fire, the 2nd Battalion would have to capture the town of Haute-Yutz,^o already known to be occupied, the hill south of the town and the modern fortification, Fort d'Illange.^o The plan of the battalion commander for the attack of November 14 is given in the words of his order:

"After an artillery preparation from 0630 until 0645, Company G will attack and seize the town of Haute-Yutz^o by 0830. One platoon of heavy machine guns will take up positions on the south side of Haute-Yutz and support the (continuation of) attack. Companies E and F will enter Haute-Yutz^o upon its capture by Company G and will be at the line of departure (the southwestern edge of the town) by 0830 ready to launch an attack on the hill 300 yards southwest of Haute-Yutz.^o Double envelopment will be used with Company E attacking the hill from the east, and Company F attacking from the north using a covered route. Attack will start at 0900 after a 30-minute preparation of artillery on both the objective and Fort d'Illange.^o Smoke will be fired from 0855 until 0900 on both Fort d'Illange^o and the objective if the wind is from the north. Company H will be in position to support the attack from positions previously selected by visual reconnaissance that can be made from 0830 to 0900. Company G will reorganize when Companies F and E have reached the line of departure and will revert to battalion reserve, ready to move on battalion order. Two green clusters fired in quick succession will signal the lifting of artillery fires. Upon capture of the objective, all companies will guard against counterattack and will be ready to continue the attack of Fort d'Illange on battalion order."

Company G attacked on schedule astride the road to Haute-Yutz.^o As the company approached the town, it came under heavy machine gun and mortar fire. Nevertheless, it managed to overrun the forward elements of the enemy, estimated to be of single company strength. By 0850, the Germans had withdrawn from Haute-Yutz,^o leaving nine dead and seven prisoners behind. Companies E and F crossed the line of departure at 0900 according to the battalion plan. Machine gun fire swept the hill as they advanced, but they forced the enemy to withdraw in the face of their marching fire. By 0940 the objective was gained and 11 prisoners were captured as the companies began reorganization.

While the battalion readied itself for an attack on Fort d'Illange,^o 1st Lt. James C. Billings of Company E went forward with an interpreter under a white flag to negotiate for the surrender of the fort.

The commander of the German garrison, a major, received the envoys, but he declined to discuss terms. "I will fight to the last," he said.

Companies E and F jumped off against Fort d'Illange^o at 1300. Company F was on the right moving along the road from Haute-Yutz^o to the fort, while Company E swung left to attack from the east flank. Company F neared the Bois d'Illange before it came under fire. Then machine guns opened up on both flanks. The company split and moved onto the gun positions with marching fire. Three Germans were killed, 18 surrendered, and the guns were silenced. Company E, meanwhile, ran into trouble as soon as it emerged from the woods. Six 120-millimeter mortars located in Fort d'Illange^o were able to concentrate on the company, and it was forced back into Tombe woods^o to escape observation. On the second attempt to cross the road toward the fort, it was met with fierce machine gun fire. The company suffered 32 casualties, and the battalion commander ordered it to withdraw into the Bois d'Illange^o and to reorganize as battalion reserve.

Company F continued its movement through the Bois d'Illange^o toward the fort despite a concentration of more than 400 rounds of 120- and 50-millimeter mortar ammunition. The company pressed across the main road under machine gun fire and reached a double band of barbed wire, each band consisting of six double apron fences, surrounding the fort. No motor vehicles had yet crossed the river and no bangalore torpedoes or other heavy engineer demolitions were available. It was therefore necessary to breach the double band with wire cutters alone, and the men were forced to work under constant machine gun and artillery fire in broad daylight.

Each of two platoons cut a gap, and each pushed on through it to attack the fort proper. The 3rd platoon breached the wire and entered the fort from the southwest. Three 80 millimeter mortars were located, and their crews were killed in an assault which employed rifles, hand grenades and bayonets. The 2nd platoon entered the fort from the north.

In the meantime, Company C had been moved from Haute-Yutz^o to the hill south of the town. When Company E was ordered to withdraw and to reorganize as battalion reserve, Company G, less one platoon left in position to protect the exposed flank of the battalion, moved through the Bois d'Illange^o to the left of Company F. The 1st and 3rd platoons of Company G then passed through the gaps in the barbed wire entanglement and entered the fort, reducing by marching fire the machine guns which opposed their entry.

At dark, November 14, the 2nd Battalion had four platoons inside Fort d'Illange,^o two from Company F and two from Company G.

During the day, the Bailey bridge across the Moselle at Thionville^o was completed. Two platoons of the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion were crossed immediately and took up positions in the vicinity of Fort Yutz^o and Fort d'Illange^o to guard against an armored counter-attack. Two platoons of 57-millimeter anti-tank guns were also brought across to bolster the anti-mechanized defenses of the bridge-head. Priority on the bridge was to go to the 10th Armored Division at dark, so the Battalion's medical and supply installations and rear command post were moved to Fort Yutz^o by 1645. The constant movement of the 10th Armored Division across the bridge prevented the evacuation of casualties to the west bank of the river and 45 wounded men had to be left at the battalion aid station at Fort Yutz^o overnight.

Although the bridge alleviated the battalion's supply problem, serious difficulties still remained. A roadblock on the road to Fort d'Illange^o forced the use of carrying parties for the last thousand yards through the woods and the barbed wire entanglements to the troops inside the fort. The Germans maintained continuous artillery and mortar fire on this area, but carrying parties from Company H nevertheless managed to get through with ammunition and demolitions including beehive charges, bangalore torpedoes and satchel charges for the final assault.

During the night of November 14-15, the four platoons inside Fort d'Illange^o sent patrols probing into the enemy positions and by daylight five enemy strongpoints had been definitely located. At 0630 assault teams moved against each of these five bunkers and emplaced beehive charges timed to explode at 0645. The Germans were on guard, and the assault teams were forced to crawl the last 30 yards under small arms fire. But all the five bunkers were blown, and at 0700 the assault teams moved in again, this time to place string charges (10-pound TNT packets strung on primer cord) through the holes blown by the beehive charges. The charges effected a reduction of all resistance in the bunkers; 10 of the enemy were killed and 14 captured.

In the continuation of the attack, the 2nd platoon of Company F moved to the southwest section of the fort, while the 3rd platoon undertook the assault of the one bunker still resisting in the northern section of the fort. The two platoons of Company G, meanwhile, worked their way toward the center of the fort. By 1100 Fort d'Illange^o was effectively under the control of the 2nd Battalion, and by 1200 the last German had been killed or captured. The commanding officer and some of the garrison had withdrawn during the night.

With the fall of Fort d'Illange,^o the independent operations of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry came to an end and the battalion became a component of Task Force Bacon (commanded by Col. Robert L. Bacon, newly assigned to the 95th Division). The formation of this task force, effective at 1015 November 15, was the last step in a development begun as early as the Operations Instruction of November 12, for it represented the union of the two bridgeheads of Thionville^o and Uckange.^o The task force was composed of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry, the 95th Reconnaissance Troop, the 807th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company D of the 778th Tank Battalion.

The history of Task Force Bacon and of its rapid drive down the east bank of the Moselle is a part of the 95th Division's all-out assault on Metz, and it is treated separately. However, the operation of the task force on November 15 is more naturally treated as the conclusion of the Thionville^o operation. In the first place, until contact could be established between the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry and the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry, and until the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry could be relieved from the state of siege in which the enemy had held it since November 13, Task Force Bacon would exist only on paper as a unified command. In the second place, the operations of November 15 were primarily operations of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, and the plan of attack was a continuation of the drive south from Thionville.

While mopping up operations in Fort d'Illange^o were being completed, a strong patrol from Company E was sent south to the village of Illange^o to clear the town of the enemy and to outpost the high ground to the south. The bulk of the Germans had withdrawn, leaving only a small group to fight a delaying action, and by 1125 the patrol had accomplished its mission. At 1200 the 2nd Battalion, with a company of towed tank destroyers attached and with the 95th Reconnaissance Troop scouting to the front, resumed its advance south toward the surrounded 1st Battalion 377th Infantry. As Company G approached Imeldange,^o machine guns opened fire from houses at the edge of the village and heavy artillery and mortar fire began falling along the main road from the north. Company G reduced the machine guns with marching fire, a tank destroyer was brought up to fire into the town and enemy resistance collapsed. Meanwhile, while Company G was entering Imeldange,^o Company F had swung to the right toward Bertrange^o and by 1600 had routed the Germans who had been containing the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry. During the advance toward Imeldange,^o Lt. Colonel Maroun,^o who had been wounded during the assault of Fort d'Illange^o but refused to be evacu-

ated, was again wounded and this time incapacitated. Major Alexander C. Granzin,^o executive officer, took the command of the battalion. By 1630, both Bertrange^o and Imeldange^o were completely under Division control and the 1st Battalion had been relieved. The remainder of the day was devoted to reorganization of the 1st Battalion, reduced to less than half its effective strength during the siege, and to the organization of Task Force Bacon. After dark, patrols from the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry moved out to reconnoiter the enemy's next defensive line and plans were made for a continuation of the attack to the south.

For its achievements from November 10 through November 15, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry was awarded Battle Honors by General Twaddle November 23. General Twaddle's commendation was confirmed by the War Department in the name of the President of the United States, March 30, 1945, and the battalion received the highest honor an organization can win, a Distinguished Unit Citation. In the words of the award, summarizing the action: "During the five days of this action, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry engaged in its first offensive operation and, functioning until the last day as a separate command, forced a crossing of the flooded Moselle River, advanced more than three miles against a stubbornly resisting enemy, killed an estimated 300 Germans, captured 215 prisoners, reduced two major fortifications and routed a large enemy force. During this period the battalion suffered more than 200 casualties.

"The desperate determination, great personal courage and outstanding professional skill of the officers and men of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry gained the bridgehead at Thionville,^o which made possible the successful execution of the XX Corps plan for the capture of Metz. Their example is an inspiration to all members of this command."

Formal acknowledgment of the 2nd Battalion's citation, the first to be awarded a 95th Division unit, was made by General Twaddle^o in a special ceremony at 1030, June 21, 1945, at Camp Old Gold,^o France. As a symbol of the grant of the Distinguished Unit Citation Badge to the entire organization, General Twaddle^o pinned the badge on Lt. Colonel Maroun.

THE MAIN ASSAULT ON METZ

November 14-17, 1944

From November 8 through November 14, the 95th Division had been primarily concerned with three operations: The attack on the Maizieres° pocket, the Uckange° bridgehead and the Thionville° bridgehead. At the same time, however, plans were being made and revised in preparation for the final mission assigned the Division: On Corps order, attack and seize the city of Metz. On November 14, the over-all picture was such that General Twaddle° could request permission to proceed with these plans and initiate a 95th Division assault on Fortress Metz.

By November 14, the 90th Division had expanded its bridgehead at Koenigsmacher° north of Thionville° and was ready to resume its attack. The 5th Division, attacking south of Metz, was proceeding on schedule. Fort d'Illange° was under assault by the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry. When it fell, the Germans would no longer have observed artillery fire on the Thionville° bridge, newly completed by engineers, and the 10th Armored Division would be able to cross the Moselle and attack to the east. The 95th Division had two Infantry Battalions (1st Battalion 377th Infantry and 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry) to the east of the Moselle, and these forces would soon be united and placed under a single command as elements of Task Force Bacon.

Accordingly, the morning of November 14, General Twaddle° requested from General Walker,° commanding the XX Corps, permission to alter the original plan and to attack south into Metz astride the Moselle, beginning the assault November 15. Permission was granted. This meant a modification of the original Corps plan. The 95th Division was not to wait until the 90th and 5th divisions had encircled Metz but would itself launch the main attack at an earlier stage of the operation. Further, the 95th Division would not attack from the west alone but it would also have a strong spearhead, Task Force Bacon, to the east of the Moselle.

The order for the assault on Metz was issued by General Twaddle November 14 as Change No. 1 to Field Order No. 2 of November 7. It made definite the time of attack, originally given merely as "on Division order" and effected certain changes of attachment. However, its main significance lay in the addition of Task Force Bacon to the three regiments as a fourth spearhead against Metz.

The 377th Infantry was to launch the main effort under the old Division plan at 1000 November 15 and to drive south to the Metz suburb of Woippy.^o The 378th Infantry was to launch an attack at 0800 November 15 against the northern group of the western series of fortifications and to assist the advance of the 377th Infantry. The 379th was to continue the attack, begun the morning of November 14, against the southern group of the western fortifications. Finally, Task Force Bacon was to attack south in conjunction with the 90th Division down the east bank of the Moselle on Division order. (It will be remembered that when Change No. 1 was issued November 14 Fort d'Illange^o had not yet fallen and the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry was still isolated in Bertrange^o and Imeldange.^o)

Initially, therefore, four separate drives would be directed against Metz and, if they progressed on schedule, all would eventually merge in one final concerted assault. For greater clarity and continuity, the three regiments and Task Force Bacon will each be given separate treatment during the first days of the assault, beginning with the 379th Infantry which had launched its attack the morning of November 14 in order to draw German attention away from the main effort of the 377th Infantry to the north.

The 379th Infantry Regiment—November 14-18

When the 95th Division was relieved by the 5th Division in the Pagny bridgehead and moved north to a position before Metz in the first days of November, the 379th Infantry had originally placed only one battalion in the line. This was its 2nd Battalion which relieved a battalion of the 359th Infantry Regiment of the 90th Division in the Gravelotte^o sector. On November 7-8, the regiment relieved elements of the 10th Armored Division in the sector extending south from Gravelotte^o to Noveant.^o The 1st Battalion took over the northern portion of this sector and the 3rd Battalion the southern. Facing the regiment in this new position were the great southwestern fortifications including Forts Jeanne d'Arc,^o de Guise^o and Driant^o as well as innumerable smaller defensive works such as bunkers, concrete dugouts and fortified buildings.

In the period before the main assault, the 379th Infantry, like the other regiments, had engaged in active patrolling, with patrols ranging in size from a squad to a reinforced platoon. In Field Order No.

2, of November 7, the regiment was given the usual mission of containing the enemy in zone. In addition, on Division order, it was to launch an attack in zone and capture objectives Nos. 5 (ridge northwest of Vaux^o) and 6 (high ground southeast of Fort Jeanne d'Arc^o).

At 1425 November 13, General Twaddle^o ordered the 379th Infantry to launch the attack against these objectives not later than 1430, November 14. The attack was to be supported by the 359th Field Artillery Battalion, the 204th Field Artillery Battalion, Company B 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and by some miscellaneous captured artillery (the captured weapons fired so many short rounds that their use was discontinued after a few hours). Accordingly, the 379th Infantry began to regroup its forces for the attack. The 3rd Battalion was stretched north to cover the entire regimental front, and the 1st and 2nd battalions were regrouped in assembly areas in preparation for the attack. The 2nd Battalion was to attack on the left (north) to capture an initial objective on the high ground between Fort Jeanne d'Arc^o and Fort de Guise;^o on order, it would continue the attack to its final objective southeast of Fort Jeanne d'Arc.^o The 1st Battalion on the right was given as initial objectives a group of forts south of Fort Jeanne d'Arc (from north to south these were Forts St. Hubert,^o Jussy Nord,^o Jussy Sud^o and Bois de la Dame^o); on order, it would continue the attack to its final objective, the high ground northwest of Vaux.^o In other words, the 379th Regiment planned to bypass the tremendous Fort Jeanne d'Arc^o from both north and south; its two attacking battalions would work their way through the line of western forts and would eventually gain control of the high ground east of these forts.

The 2nd Battalion jumped off at 0545 November 14 with Companies E and F attacking, Company G in reserve. By 0850 the attacking companies had reached their first objective and had captured a number of pillboxes; by 1100 they were on the final objective. During the afternoon, three German counterattacks were directed against these two companies but all were successfully repulsed. Meanwhile, however, the German lines which had been breached in the assault closed behind the attacking companies. When Company G, in battalion reserve, attempted to move forward to join the cut-off companies it was turned back by tremendous concentrations of artillery and mortar fire and by deadly small arms fire coming from the complex system of bunkers surrounding the great forts.

The 1st Battalion 379th Infantry jumped off in the attack at 0600 with Company B on the left, Company A on the right and Company C in reserve. The attack ran into heavy small arms, mortar and

artillery fire in the draw running southeast from Gravelotte,^o but by noon the battalion had penetrated the line of forts. Company B had been given Fort St. Hubert^o and Fort Jussy^o Nord as objectives; by a small error of direction it captured Forts Jussy Nord^o and Jussy Sud^o instead of its original objectives. Company A was assigned Fort Jussy Sud^o and Fort Bois de la Dame.^o There was an initial period of confusion when Company A attacked Jussy Sud,^o not knowing that Company B had already taken it. Company A then continued against Bois de la Dame.^o The fort was overrun and some penetration of the main structure attained, but German artillery falling on the exposed surfaces of the fort made the Company A positions untenable and they were forced to withdraw. As in the case of the 2nd Battalion, the attacking companies of the 1st Battalion were isolated at the end of the day. Company C, in battalion reserve, attempted to join the isolated units but it became involved in a fire-fight in the draw southeast of Gravelotte.^o It was pulled back and reorganized the night of November 14-15.

By late evening of November 14, the position of the 1st and 2nd battalions was critical. The two assaulting companies of the 1st Battalion were separated from the remainder of the regiment by a wooded draw approximately 300 feet deep and 800 yards wide. The enemy had infiltrated into this draw in strength, and neither supply of the isolated companies nor evacuation of the wounded was possible. The two assaulting companies of the 2nd Battalion were similarly cut off from the remainder of the regiment. In addition, the commanding officer of the 2nd Battalion, Lt. Col. Joseph L. Golson,^o had been wounded and evacuated during the attack, and the battalion S-3, Capt. Charles M. Gattis,^o assumed command until the execution officer, Maj. Jason L. Richmond,^o should be able to rejoin the battalion.

The Uckange^o operation had shown that isolated troops could be supplied by air with the use of liaison planes from Division Artillery, and this method was used again for the two battalions of the 379th Infantry. As early as the afternoon of November 14, the first day of the attack, ammunition, radio batteries and much needed medical supplies were dropped to the 2nd Battalion. On November 15 the liaison planes began to supply the 1st Battalion as well. The Technique used was the same as that employed at Uckange.^o However, since the planes were forced to fly near a portion of Fort Jeanne d'Arc^o where anti-aircraft guns were emplaced, it was necessary to give them artillery support against these guns for the short period that the planes were over the fort. The support was successful, and no planes were damaged by antiaircraft fire during the operation. Sup-

ply by air continued until November 18 when normal supply channels were reopened.

Meanwhile, the night of November 14-15, plans were being made to effect relief of the isolated 1st and 2nd battalions. Company L was detached from the 3rd Battalion, in regimental reserve in the vicinity of Rezonville,^o and was directed to join Company C in an attack across the draw southeast of Gravelotte.^o The two companies, under the command of Lt. Col. Tobias R. Philbin^o of the 1st Battalion, were to pass through Companies A and B on the initial objective and to push on to Vaux.^o

The attack jumped off at 0900. The Germans had brought up reinforcements from Fort Driant^o during the night and resistance in the draw was extremely heavy. By the early afternoon, Company C had fought its way through and joined the remainder of the 1st Battalion on the initial objective. However, it had suffered heavy casualties and was unable to continue the attack to the final objective. Company L reached the east side of the draw, but it could not advance further during the day. The night of November 15-16, Company L was withdrawn and rejoined the 3rd Battalion, which continued as regimental reserve and was moved to the 2nd Battalion zone.

During the day of November 15, Company G made repeated efforts to open a route to the remainder of the 2nd Battalion. It was unsuccessful, primarily because of concentrated fire coming from a fortified area midway between Forts de Guise^o and Jeanne d'Arc.^o The evening of November 15, the regimental combat scouts were sent to aid in the neutralization of a key strong-point. Demolitions were used, but their effect was negligible and the attack was momentarily at a standstill. The morning of November 16 found the 1st and 2nd battalions in the same position. Meanwhile, plans were being made to have the 3rd Battalion launch an attack through the zone of the 2nd Battalion. The attack jumped off at 1400 with Company I on the right, Company K on the left and Company L in reserve.

Company I made successful progress against moderate resistance, and by 1545 had occupied both St. Hubert Farm^o and Moscow Farm,^o two of the fortified buildings from which the enemy had been able to harass the supply line to the 2nd Battalion. Company K, with the assistance of the regimental scouts, assaulted the strong-point which had given Company G so much trouble the day before, and it finally fell to a combination of courage and bluff in the afternoon.

Sgt. Melvin A. Grondhai^o and Pfc. Edwin A. Kolodziej^o moved through heavy artillery, mortar and automatic weapon fire to a mound of dirt directly in front of the strong-point. They emplaced their machine gun and poured fire into the enemy position until the op-

posing gun ceased fire. Thereupon the commander of the strong-point surrendered with his entire garrison of 46 men. On being questioned, he admitted that the confident emplacement of the machine gun before the pillbox by Grondhal^o and Kolodziej^o led him to believe that he was surrounded by American troops and that his position was helpless. The taking of this strong-point proved the key to the supply not only of the 2nd Battalion but also of the whole regiment and made the advance of the next day considerably easier.

At 0645 November 17, the 3rd Battalion resumed the attack. To the north it captured Leipzig Farm^o and hill 332.9. Meanwhile, Companies K and L drove toward the 2nd Battalion, and by 1245 they had joined with it on its final objective. The afternoon of November 17, the 1st Battalion, isolated for three days, was ordered to attack and join the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. The time was originally set for 1600 November 17, but a postponement was granted until the next day. It jumped off before dawn November 18, and by 0930 had made contact with the 3rd Battalion.

By November 18, consequently, the 379th Infantry had successfully united its forces behind the German line of fortifications. In addition, it had a supply line open and all the bunkers and forts captured were occupied in order to keep this route free of fire. The security of this supply line was increased when, the morning of November 18, a platoon of Company G entered Fort de Guise^o to the north and found it unoccupied. During the night of November 18-19, 20 jeeps and 15 two-and-one-half-ton trucks delivered supplies to the forward areas, the first direct ground supply to the attacking elements since the attack began November 15.

However, as long as Forts Jeanne d'Arc^o and Driant^o remained in action, the regiment would lack complete freedom of movement in its zone, and as late as November 19-20 it was again necessary to make use of artillery liaison planes, this time for evacuation. Some men had been wounded in the fighting to the west of Fort Jeanne d'Arc^o and had been taken to nearby bunkers for emergency treatment. Because of the mining of roads and of severe enemy fire, it was impossible to evacuate them by ambulance. Accordingly, the regimental surgeon, Maj. Edgar E. Cleaver, decided to fly to the bunkers and to evacuate the patients by plane. A large Geneva Convention red cross was painted on the plane, and while it did not prevent enemy fire, the flight was successfully completed. Five of the wounded were evacuated November 19. Major Cleaver remained overnight in the bunker, and November 20 four more patients were flown out.

With the union of its forward elements on November 18, the initial

operation of the 379th Infantry may be regarded as concluded. On November 17, the regiment had been ordered to attack to the Moselle in conjunction with the advance of the 377th and 378th Infantry Regiments. On November 18, the 379th reached the Moselle and on November 19 it made contact with the 378th Infantry, but these operations will be treated as a part of the final concerted assault of the 95th Division on Metz.

THE 378th INFANTRY REGIMENT

November 15-17

Until November 15, the 378th Infantry was primarily engaged in active patrolling on a large scale. On November 10, for example, a reconnaissance in force was conducted in the vicinity of Amanvillers^o and of the Montigny-la-Grange farm (between Forts Kellermann^o and de Guise^o). The patrol consisted of four rifle platoons, reinforced by 16 of the regimental combat scouts. Contact was made with the enemy at several points, and four prisoners were taken. In addition, German positions were located on which artillery could be directed after the return of the patrol. Similar reconnaissance in force was conducted on succeeding nights. On the night of November 12-13, the 378th Infantry seized and occupied a German outpost in Amanvillers.^o The operation was carried through by a reinforced platoon of Company K. Little resistance was encountered initially and the enemy was apparently too surprised to put up a fight. However, a counterattack later in the evening, though small and easily repulsed, showed that the Germans did not plan to give up without opposition any more ground on the road to Metz.

On November 14, when the Division issued Change No. 1 to Field Order No. 2, calling for the main assault on Metz, the 378th Infantry began the final regrouping of its forces for the attack which it had been directed to launch at 0800 November 15. The regimental plan of attack was to execute a flanking movement and to attack the Canrobert^o group of forts from the northeast. Reconnaissance patrols had made clear the futility of a frontal attack; the forts were on commanding ground, they had interlocking bands of fire and mutually supporting artillery and to the front of the forts a high concrete wall extended almost the entire length of the regimental sector. The 378th Infantry, therefore, planned to concentrate all its forces on its extreme left flank and to launch an attack passing through the zone of the 377th Infantry to the north.

In order to succeed with this plan, it was necessary to strip the original regimental sector of most of its strength and yet do this in such a way that the Germans would realize neither that the line in front of the forts was held only by a skeleton force nor that the bulk

of the 378th power was being concentrated for an attack in the north. The key part in the deception of the enemy was played by Task Force St. Jacques (Capt. William M. St. Jacques,^o Service Company commander, 378th Infantry) which was formed November 14. It consisted of three rifle platoons, one platoon of the Anti-Tank Company, one squad of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon and detachments of cooks and clerks from the rear echelon. The task force had nine caliber .50 machine guns and some captured Danish artillery pieces, but it was equipped primarily with loud speakers. The mission of this miscellaneous force was to occupy positions along the eight and one-half miles of the regimental front and, by whatever methods feasible, deceive the enemy into thinking that there had been no change on that front. The small task force was completely successful and remained in position until the fortified area to its front had been reduced.

The 1st Battalion (to which one platoon of 81-millimeter mortars and one platoon of heavy machine guns from Company M were attached) jumped off in the attack at 0800 with Company A on the right, Company C on the left and Company B in reserve. A 15-minute artillery preparation on the forts and on the town of Feves^o preceded the attack. To support the assaulting companies, a base of fire had been set up on the slope south of Marange^o using machine guns and mortars. The day was foggy and visibility was poor; to further restrict the enemy's observation a smoke concentration had been placed on the forts.

Company A, on the right, succeeded in advancing as far as the vicinity of Fremecourt Farm^o before it was detected. It then met heavy small arms resistance and the support platoon was committed. By 0900 the company had fought its way past the farm and was working its way through the barbed wire defenses at the foot of Fort de Feves.^o The company commander, Capt. George W. Hunter,^o was wounded in the attack, but Lt. Leo Prough^o took command and personally led an assault with marching fire up the hill to Fort de Feves.^o By 1100 the company was on its objective. It reorganized for the inevitable counterattack and sent out patrols southwest along the ridge to explore the enemy strength in the Canrobert forts.^o

Meanwhile, Company C, on the left, met with stiff resistance from dug-in positions as it advanced toward Feves.^o Progress was slow but steady, and by 1045 the company was fighting its way into the town. Company B, originally in reserve, was given the mission of capturing Semecourt.^o Great difficulty was encountered in the two fire-swept minefields on the outskirts of the town, and at one time part of the company was slowly closing in on the objective while the remainder fought off a strong counterattack from the rear. By 1255



Clouds of smoke rise on the horizon at the 95th Division Artillery fires on Semecourt previous to the 378th Infantry's assault of the town.

Semecourt^o had been taken. A command post was captured, 30 prisoners were taken and an estimated 20 of the enemy were killed or wounded.

From the stubborn resistance of the Germans and even more from the vicious counterattacks which they soon launched, it was clear that the enemy realized the significance of the gains made by the 378th Infantry. And Fort de Feves^o was the key point. The first counterattack was launched at 1255 with about 40 riflemen, but it was easily repulsed. At 1300 the strongest counterattack was experienced. Between 150 and 200 infantry were seen to be forming. Artillery was called for and fell with deadly accuracy on the troop concentration. The remnants of the original group, reduced now to about 100 men, attacked anyway, but Company A repulsed them. At 1400 the company had to beat off another counterattack of about 80 men, and at 1535 a last effort was directed against the right flank of Company A by about 35 men. Fort de Feves^o was lost to the Germans.

While the fighting for Fort de Feves was in progress the 1st Battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Christian L. Olivier, was wounded and Major Paul Hudgins took over the command.

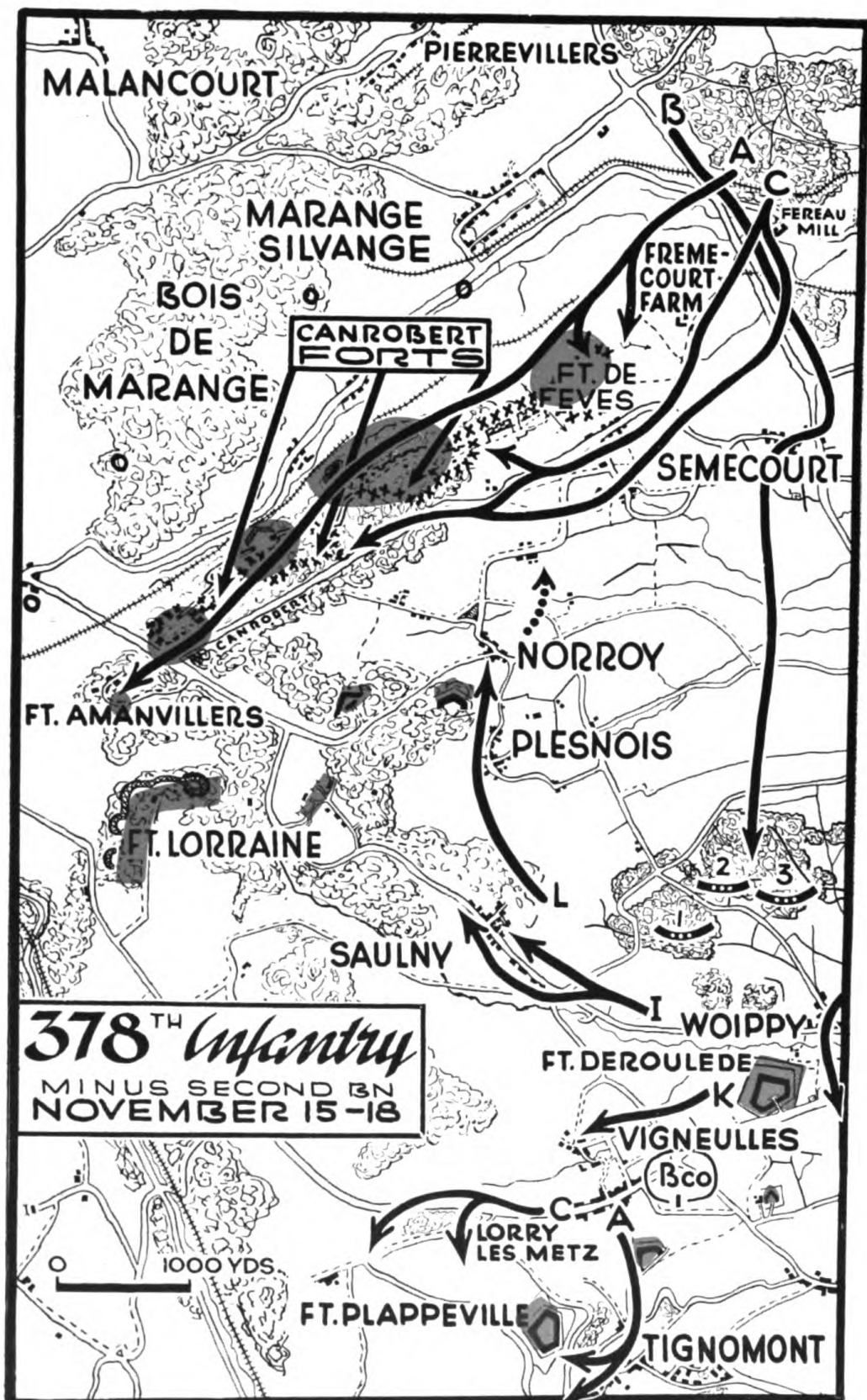
Under these conditions, it seemed to the regimental commander, Col. Samuel L. Metcalfe,^o that a temporary halt to the advance should be called and the attack resumed next day with the 3rd Battalion. After consultation with the commanding general, this suggestion was accepted. However, before the word could be passed down to lower units, the initiative of Capt. Edward L. Schoonover, commanding Company B, had carried the regiment forward to two further objectives. After taking Semecourt,^o Captain Schoonover^o decided to press the advantage gained by the rapid advance and to strike while the enemy was still disorganized. Accordingly, he moved his com-

pany out to the Bois de Woippy (Objective 3) and the high ground southwest of it (Objective 4). By 1830 both had been taken and progress had been so rapid that two batteries of 88's were over run and their crews captured at Objective 4. At dusk, Company B received a heavy counterattack, estimated at two companies, from its rear. It was finally repulsed after its leader, a German major, had been killed. Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion, in regimental reserve, was moved up, first, to Semecourt^o and later to the Bois de Woippy^o in preparation for a continuation of the attack the next day. Task Force St. Jacques, beginning to be pinched out in its northern sector, maintained its watch over the old regimental front and simulated the existence of strong forces there with such success that in the opinion of Colonel Metcalfe^o the Germans never realized what had happened.

The first day's operations of the 378th Infantry made important contributions to the Division's assault on the Fortress Metz. The capture of Fort de Feves^o was of key significance and may be compared with the capture of the slag pile by the 377th Infantry. While the fort possessed no great amount of artillery, it was probably the best observation point the Germans had and could direct the tremendous artillery power of the other Metz fortifications. From it one could see the west bank of the Moselle to well beyond Uckange^o and, in addition, most of the Task Force Bacon zone to the east of the Moselle. Fort de Feves^o was linked with the other installations of the Metz area by an elaborate system of telephones, and after VE day an officer of the 378th Infantry declared that at no time in the 95th Division's campaigns had he seen as much signal equipment in a single place as at Fort de Feves. Once the fort had fallen, an immediate change was noted in the artillery placed on the 378th area; from accurate concentrations it changed to blind harassing fire. It is also clear that the capture of Fort de Feves^o was an essential preliminary to the rapid advance of the 377th Infantry and of Task Force Bacon.

By its operations of November 15, the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry had turned the flank of the Canrobert^o forts and had driven a spearhead south behind the forts. On the left flank of this spearhead was the 377th Infantry, but on the right flank were a series of by-passed villages, from north to south Norroy-le-Veneur,^o Plesnois,^o Saulny^o and Vigneulles.^o November 16 the 3rd Battalion made the main effort of the regiment and cleaned out these villages in a drive from south to north.

Company K, supported by the mortars of Company M, jumped off in the attack at 0800 against Vigneulles.^o Using marching fire, it



had completed the occupation of the town by 1100. Company I, supported by tanks, successfully assaulted Saulny^o and by 1200 had blasted its way into it under continuous fire from the guns of Fort Lorraine^o to the west and against automatic weapon and small arms resistance from the defenders of the town.

During the morning, the rest of the 3rd Battalion, concentrated in the woods west of Woippy, was subjected to a terrific shelling from the artillery of Forts Lorraine^o and Plappeville.^o At 1400 Company L, supported by artillery, one platoon of heavy machine guns and one section of 81-millimeter mortars, was committed to the north and captured Plesnois^o by 1700 in a smashing attack that caught the enemy completely by surprise. Colonel Metcalfe^o decided to press the attack and attached Company B to the 3rd Battalion so that it might occupy Plesnois^o and leave Company L free to continue the advance. Accordingly, on the arrival of Company B, Company L, supported by tanks, advanced against Norroy-le-Veneur^o in a blaze of marching fire and by 1800 the town was completely under American control. Meanwhile, in the last operation of the day, elements of the battalion had extended the regimental front south from Vigneulles^o by capturing Lorry-les-Metz^o just before dusk.

The regimental commander ordered the 3rd Battalion to defend the line from Plesnois^o south 5,000 yards through Lorry-les-Metz.^o It must be remembered that on the 378th Infantry's exposed flank were both Fort Lorraine^o and Fort Plappeville,^o to name only the two most important of a whole series of fortifications. These forts held dominating positions on the high ground to the west and continued to place artillery on all observed movements of Division troops. In addition, prisoner of war reports indicated that they were strongly manned, and the threat of a dangerous counterattack was always present.

On November 16, while the 3rd Battalion was cleaning out the towns on the regiment's flank, Colonel Metcalfe ordered the 1st Battalion to prepare to seize the three Canrobert Forts^o the morning of November 17. The balance of November 16 was spent in reorganization, in reconnaissance and in planning for the attack. At 0800 November 17, Companies A and C jumped off and moved down the ridge against light opposition. By 1300 the three Canrobert forts^o were occupied. Company A sent out a patrol to Fort Amanvillers,^o and when it was found empty, it, too, was occupied and outposted.

At 1030 November 17, Colonel Metcalfe^o received the order from Division which directed him to launch an attack at 1300 (later changed to 1400) to drive to the Moselle bridges. This attack was to be part of a concerted Division effort by the three regiments and



Supporting tanks park on "88 Boulevard" waiting for a signal to move forward.

by Task Force Bacon and will be treated in the day by day account of the Division operation from November 17 through the fall of Metz. Here, however, the history of the 1st Battalion, which did not take part in the drive to the Moselle, will be followed through its attack on Fort Plappeville.⁹

While the 1st Battalion was still engaged in clearing opposition from the Canrobert forts⁹ and from Fort Amanvillers,⁹ the 378th Infantry received orders to move it as soon as practicable to an assembly area south of Saulny⁹ and to prepare to attack to the southwest in order to relieve the 379th Infantry. The evening of November 17, these

orders were changed and the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion was directed to move to a position between Lorry° and Vigneulles° early next morning. Patrols were to be sent to Fort Plappeville° to determine if it were occupied and in what strength. The same evening a patrol from the regimental scouts entered Fort Lorraine° and found it empty, and during the night the 1st Battalion entered Forts Kellermann° and LaSalle,° finding both of them unoccupied.

During the attack to the river line, on November 17 and 18 the 377th and 378th Infantry regiments were harassed by artillery fire from Fort Plappeville,° and at 1245 November 18, the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry was ordered to attack the fort. The battalion jumped off at 1430 with Company C in the assault, Company B in position at Lorry° ready to join in the attack and Company A in reserve between Vigneulles° and Lorry°. Company C advanced slowly until it was met by fierce small arms fire coming from dug-in positions. Its support platoon was committed but the company was still unable to advance. Accordingly, the commanding officer of the 1st Battalion ordered Company C to withdraw in order that artillery might be placed on the dug-in positions. Division Artillery and mortar fire inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy and only a few succeeded in withdrawing to the fort.

At 1600 the attack was resumed. Company B made the main effort on the right, with Company C in a supporting position on the left. By 1730 a platoon of Company B was on the fort, but Company C, after advancing to its former position, was again halted, this time by machine gun fire coming from within the fort.

After dark, the commanding officer of the 378th Infantry ordered Company C to withdraw to the high ground south of Lorry° and to hold this position during the night. He further ordered the withdrawal of the platoon of Company B from the fort in order that heavy artillery might be used against it. However, the large number of casualties in the platoon, including the platoon leader, made such a withdrawal impossible; the platoon remained in position and casualties were evacuated throughout the night.

The 1st Battalion then received orders not to attempt to enter the fort but merely to neutralize it. At 0730 November 19, the attack was resumed. By 0800 Company C had reached the 20-foot moat outside the fort and had begun the encirclement. Company A joined in the attack and reduced a number of strong-points outside the main fort, capturing 51 prisoners. At 1300 Company C had men dug in on three sides of Fort Plappeville,° which was now completely cut off and neutralized to the extent that from it nothing more than small arms fire could be directed against Division forces.

On November 20 the 1st Battalion aggressively pressed its mission of containing Fort Plappeville.^o Two tanks, supported by a platoon of Company C, fired smoke into the ventilating system intake of the fort and 276 Germans surrendered. Finally, on November 21, the 1st Battalion was relieved of its mission of containing Fort Plappeville^o by the 379th Infantry.

The 377th Infantry Regiment—November 15-17

By its limited objective attack beginning November 8, the 377th Infantry had seized the slag pile south of Maizieres^o and Brieux Chateau.^o In Change No. 1 to Field Order No. 2 it was ordered to attack in zone at 1000 November 15, to execute the Division main effort and to seize the Division objective.

Preparatory to this main attack it would be necessary to wipe out German resistance in by-pass "Victory Village" (Nouvelle Colonie),^o and this mission was given to Company K. Supported by the weapons of Company G on the slag pile, Company K jumped off at 0800. It first tried a frontal assault over the railroad tracks but was turned back by withering machine gun fire. The company then advanced to the point where the road underpassed the railroad but did not dare proceed in the face of almost certain mines. Accordingly, a holding force was left at the underpass, while the 1st and 2nd platoons moved around by the slag pile to encircle Victory Village^o from the rear. At 1430 they rushed the village. Resistance continued, however, and it was only with tank support that the village was finally cleared in the late afternoon and 76 prisoners taken.

Meanwhile, at 1000 the commanding officer of the 377th Infantry decided to proceed with the main attack even though fighting continued in Victory Village.^o The 2nd Battalion was on the regiment's right flank and the 3rd Battalion on the left. The 2nd Battalion, after supporting with fire the attack of Company K, moved southeast where it encountered numerous mines and heavy artillery and mortar fire around the east edge of the slag pile. It continued south down the road to St. Remy in a column of companies with Company E in the lead, Company F following and Company G in reserve. Resistance was moderate and by 1430 the Battalion Command Post was able to move into St. Remy.^o Meanwhile the assault continued into St. Agathe.^o Here considerable difficulty was encountered at the road embankment and railroad underpass southeast of the town. By a series of small actions the machine guns defending the underpass were knocked out and the Germans were unable to carry out their planned demolitions. Continuing its rapid advance, Company E, now far ahead of friendly units on both right and left, drove into the outskirts of Woippy^o and at dusk Company F joined it there. The

action developed into the pursuit of a disorganized enemy and many prisoners were taken, some of whom had been flushed out by the attack of the 378th Infantry on the right. In addition, large quantities of small arms were taken as well as eight of the dreaded 88's. Toward evening, Company G moved from its reserve position in the vicinity of the slag pile into St. Agathe^o and spent the night in a German barracks there.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion had cleared the left of the regimental sector. At 1000 Company K was left to clean up Victory Village,^o while Companies L and I jumped off in their attack. Company L, on the right, first sent a patrol into the cemetery east of the slag pile but no enemy were found. The main body of the company then advanced south and captured six machine guns on the east-west road below Maizieres.^o At Tappes Farm,^o an "88" temporarily slowed down the attack, but the mortars of Company M soon put it out of action. At the farm, Company L reorganized and, in its final action

In a battalion command post "somewhere in France" during the Division's assault on Metz.



of the day, pushed into La Maxe^o at dusk against relatively light opposition.

Company I, on the left of the battalion zone, met heavy opposition in its cross-country drive south. It was faced by an elaborate system of trenches and was forced to fight its way from trench to trench for 700 yards under heavy mortar and artillery fire. The opposition collapsed when the company outflanked a position at Amelange Ford,^o at the junction of the Canal des Mines and the Moselle River. At dusk, Company L moved with marching fire into its section of La Maxe^o and joined Company I.

The 377th Infantry resumed the attack on November 16. The 2nd Battalion supported by tanks undertook to finish cleaning out Woippy^o and by 1400 the town was completely cleared and approximately 75 Germans had been killed. In this operation, S/Sgt. Andrew Miller,^o Congressional Medal of Honor winner, played an important part in the success of Company G. Two machine guns, mounted near a highway intersection, forced his company to take cover. Ordering his men to remain where they were, Sergeant Miller^o left a position of safety and made his way through the cross-fire of the machine guns to the rear of a building in which one of the guns was emplaced. Boldly entering the house, he forced the crew of five to surrender at bayonet point. After Miller^o had signalled for two of his comrades to secure the prisoners, he recrossed the street and edged his way from building to building under the fire of the second gun. Ten feet from the basement where the second gun was located, Miller^o threw a fragmentation grenade and after a several minute wait, he threw a white phosphorus grenade into the smoking cellar. Of the seven-man crew, two were killed, three wounded and two taken prisoner. This single-handed action enabled Company G to resume the advance which had been stopped dead by the two machine guns.

In the late afternoon of November 16, Company E launched an attack against Fort Deroluede,^o directly southwest of Woippy.^o It managed to advance part way up the long slope leading to the fort, but concentrated fire from weapons of all sorts forced a withdrawal and the company remained that night in Woippy.^o

The 3rd Battalion jump-off the morning of November 16 was delayed by a blown bridge, and it was after 1100 when the attack began. Resistance was initially light but soon stiffened. On the battalion's right was Fort Gambetta,^o one of the older of the Metz defensive works but nevertheless a strong position. It was surrounded by a moat which the assaulting troops would have to cross, and during the years since the construction of the fort, trees had grown up about it, restricting the battalion's observation and giving

the enemy excellent cover. In addition, the approaches to the fort were zeroed in by the guns of Fort St. Julien,^o 2,500 yards to the east across the Moselle.

Company L advanced toward the fort cross-country from the north. Its 3rd platoon was almost at the moat when the guns of both St. Julien^o and Gambetta^o opened up. Casualties were heavy and the remainder of the platoon was pinned down in a shallow ditch. Some reinforcements were finally brought up and Company K moved to a position to the left of L. It was clear, however, that Fort Gambetta^o could not be taken that day, and at 1700 the companies were withdrawn.

On the battalion's left, Company I moved toward Thury,^o a hamlet southeast of La Maxe.^o Troops were even more exposed here to the guns of Fort St. Julien^o than they had been in the attack on Fort Gambetta^o and casualties were again heavy. The 1st and 3rd platoons finally made their way to Thury,^o but they had been so weakened that they were ordered to withdraw during the night.

Late the evening of November 16, General Twaddle^o ordered the 377th Infantry to maintain their present positions throughout November 17, to reorganize and to plan for a resumption of the attack at 0730 November 18. The morning of November 17, however, Division issued its order for an all-out attack to the Moselle, and the 2nd Battalion jumped off at 1400 with the 3rd Battalion prepared to follow it through Woippy,^o by-passing Fort Gambetta.^o This attack will be treated in the day by day account of the 95th Division's final assault on Fortress Metz.

TASK FORCE BACON

November 15-17

Task Force Bacon¹ was constituted at 1015 November 15, but it will be remembered that not until the afternoon was contact established between its two main components, the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry and the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry. The remainder of the day was spent in reorganization and planning. At 0700 November 16, the task force jumped off to the south in the drive that would take it into the city of Metz in three days.

The tactical disposition of the task force, as it was organized by Colonel Bacon, contributed largely to its rapid success and the general pattern remained the same in a series of engagements. The two infantry battalions were split into hooks to the left and right, proceeding in much the same manner as armored columns. In each case, tank destroyers were placed not far behind the point of the advancing battalion. When the task force later received two self-propelled 155-millimeter guns, these, too, were placed well forward where they might quickly be brought into play with the tank destroyers. The light vehicles followed with the main body while the heavy trucks and engineer vehicles came in the motor column farther to the rear.

The policy on each objective was to assault it with the heavy fire power of the tank destroyers combined with all the weapons of the infantry. Troops entered towns firing and German snipers were blasted out of buildings with a three-inch gun. The defending garrisons were completely surprised by these tactics, and they usually surrendered quickly in the face of such immediately effective fire power.

In the attack of November 16, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry undertook the initial stage of the operation. At 0700 Company G moved out from Imeldange^o and cleared the woods to the south of

¹Initially, Task Force Bacon included 1st Battalion 377th Infantry, 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry and the 95th Reconnaissance Troop. Company D 778th Tank Battalion was attached at 0330 November 16 and the 807th Tank Destroyer Battalion at 1155 the same day.

the town (Bois de Reinange).° The remainder of the Battalion moved south on the main road to Metz. Company F was in the lead; a squad of riflemen acted as the point and the remainder of the riflemen followed mounted on a platoon of light tanks. A company of tank destroyers followed the battalion, the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry was to the rear and another company of tank destroyers was in reserve.

The first enemy resistance was met at Bousse° where the Germans had left a delaying force of approximately 20 men. The Germans withdrew rapidly in the face of the marching fire of the advance guard and retired to Blettange° where they attempted another brief delaying action. The first determined resistance offered the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry was encountered at Ay-sur-Moselle° where the advance elements came under heavy machine gun fire. At the same time, the Germans adjusted accurate artillery and mortar fire on the road from Blettange° to Ay.° A platoon of Company F was sent into the woods on the left and captured a German observation post which had been adjusting the fire. The remainder of Company F with the platoon of light tanks launched a coordinated attack on Ay,° and by 1500 the town had been cleared.

Ay-sur-Moselle° was outposted by Company F, and Companies E and G moved through it to attack Tremery.° Company E attacked across the high ground north of the town while Company G moved in from the west. Tremery° was captured by 1730 and the battalion halted for reorganization.

When the 2nd Battalion was attacking Bousse,° the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry, to the rear of the task force column, turned aside briefly to the right and captured Guenange° against very light opposition. At Bousse,° it swung wide to the left and launched an attack on Rurange,° taking the town by 1500. It then continued south with the objective Montrequienne.° Both sides of the road leading into the town were heavily and openly mined, and it appeared that the German plan was to canalize the attack so that the fire of all weapons could easily be concentrated on it. However, the rapid tank-infantry advance of the 1st Battalion troops frightened the gun crews into flight; by 1600 the 1st Battalion controlled Montrequienne° and had begun to organize defenses against counterattack. During the night, motor patrols maintained contact between Montrequienne and the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry in Tremery.

November 17 the task force continued its drive south, and again the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry was on the right, the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry on the left. At 0700 the 2nd Battalion moved out of

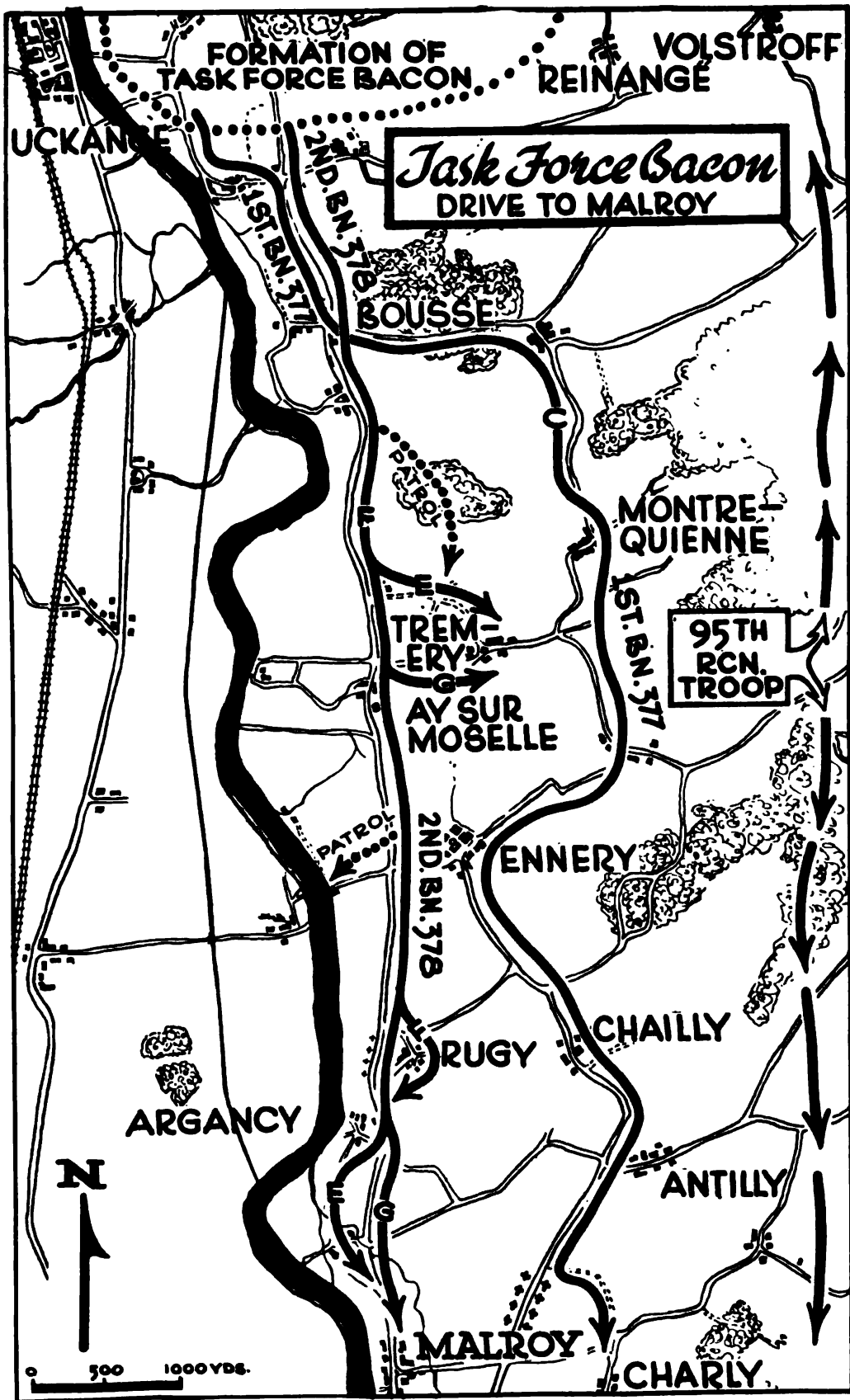


Destruction of German warehouses which lay in the path of the Division's advance on Metz.

Ay-sur-Moselle in a column of companies in the order E, G and F. However, the attack was delayed because of difficulty encountered in gas supply for the attached tanks. At 0945 a patrol was sent to Flevy^o to establish contact with the 1st Battalion 377th, which had just taken the town, and at 1030 the move to the south was continued. Rapid progress was made, and the resistance consisted merely of delaying actions by small forces.

East of Argancy^o the 2nd Battalion column divided. Company E turned off to the west and cleaned out the small villages of Argancy^o and Olgy^o, while the remainder of the battalion continued on the main road to the south. By 1415 the battalion had taken Malroy^o, and the leading elements were moving south of the town. They were met by heavy fire from 20-millimeter dual purpose guns to the southeast. A platoon of Company G moved to the south to outflank this gun position, while the mortars of Company H directed accurate fire on the guns. Direct hits were secured on one of the guns, and the crew, forced to withdraw into the fire of the Company G patrol, were killed. Another platoon of Company G was sent in a flanking movement to the right, but it was pinned down by machine gun and bazooka fire. While these actions were in progress, the guns of Fort St. Julien^o, 3,000 yards to the south, opened fire on Malroy^o and the ground to the south of it. Under these conditions, Colonel Bacon decided to pull back the 2nd Battalion into Malroy^o and to organize his forces in preparation for a coordinated attack on Fort St. Julien^o the next day. By 1530 the 2nd Battalion had returned to Malroy^o and was outposting the town. During the night, patrols were sent out to locate the major enemy positions which would have to be neutralized before the direct attack on Fort St. Julien^o could be launched.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry had made rapid progress to the east. Moving out at 0700, the battalion had taken Flevy^o and was on the outskirts of Ennery^o by 1000. Road-blocks and craters checked the advance momentarily, but by 1300 Chailly^o and Antilly^o were captured and by 1400 Charly^o and Rupigny^o, southeast of Malroy^o, had been taken. 1st Battalion troops could hear German artillery in Chieulles^o firing on the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, just then moving south out of Malroy^o. The 1st Battalion commander decided to attack. At 1445 Company C, mounted on tanks, assaulted the town from the front, while Company B executed a flanking movement from the east. The enemy was taken by surprise and surrendered with little resistance. More than a hundred prisoners were taken and a number of artillery pieces. In addition, the 1st Battalion discovered large stores of signal equipment. After clearing Chieulles,



the battalion reorganized and made plans for the attack next day. By late afternoon of November 17, consequently, Task Force Bacon held a line running from Malroy^o in the west through Chieulles^o and then northeast to Sanry-les-Vigy;^o and in accord with the Division order, plans had been made to carry the attack on into Metz.

THE FALL OF THE CITY

November 17-22

The 95th Division's attack on Metz begun November 15 had two main phases; in the first, the operations of the three regiments and of Task Force Bacon were to a large extent independent, and, in the second, these initially independent operations merged in a concerted final assault. The early independence of the major divisional units primarily from the tremendous length of the 95th Division front and from the consequent absence of lateral connection between the attacking elements. On November 16, for example, the winding battle line was approximately 42 miles long; Task Force Bacon was separated from the other Division units by the flooded Moselle, the 379th Infantry was embroiled in the great southwestern fortifications with its attacking battalions isolated and only between the 377th and 378th Infantry Regiments was there tenuous contact. Under such conditions, a day-by-day description of the Division's activities would obscure the continuity of the various regimental and task force operations, and these have been described separately. However, as the Division troops closed in on Metz, the battle line shortened and constantly closer coordination between units was possible. In this second phase, the clearest account of the Metz operation can be given from the viewpoint of the Division as a whole. Where exactly the line between the two parts should be drawn must remain in doubt and a certain amount of overlapping is unavoidable. Nevertheless, from both Corps and Division standpoint, November 17 is the best day on which to begin the unified story.

The morning of November 17, General Walker,^o commanding the XX Corps, decided that the time for the final drive into Metz had arrived. The 95th Division had the 377th and the 378th Infantry Regiments less than three miles from the Moselle bridges into Metz on the west and Task Force Bacon less than five miles from the Seille^o bridges into the city on the east. To the north, the Koenigsmacher^o bridgehead had been successfully expanded, and the 10th Armored Division, which had crossed the Moselle at Thionville,^o was driving

east to the Saar. The 90th Infantry Division was advancing south out of the Koenigsmacher^o bridgehead on the left flank of Task Force Bacon, and the night of November 16-17 its front lines were generally east of U'ckange.^o To the south, the 5th Infantry Division had pushed forward the center of its line at Augny^o and Peltre^o to within three miles of the southern suburbs of Metz. On the left it had almost surrounded the tremendous fortifications of the Verdun Group,^o five miles southwest of Metz, and on the right it was making good progress toward the interdivisional boundary with the 90th Division. The defenses of Metz were crumbling, and an intensification of the Corps attack might permit the simultaneous encirclement and destruction of the Metz garrison.

On the 95th Division front the key to rapid success lay in the seizure intact of the Moselle bridges, and Corps began the execution of plans long made for such a contingency. It was believed that the Germans had demolition charges already in place to blow these bridges and that all the demolitions were connected to a master switch somewhere in the city. However, there was an F.F.I. (French Forces of the Interior) group in Metz, estimated to number 400, and the leader was in contact with certain French west of the Moselle. It had been arranged that when the XX Corps was ready to move into Metz, it would notify the F.F.I. by radio and the French would attempt to sabotage the German demolition system. The morning of November 17, Corps broadcast the agreed announcement to the F.F.I. and at the same time it directed the 95th Division to increase the tempo of its attack and to drive for the bridges.

General Twaddle^o immediately ordered a coordinated attack by the three regiments and Task Force Bacon; originally the attack was to begin at 1300, but it proved necessary to delay it until 1400 to allow the units time for preparation. Air support was requested, but in the opinion of Corps the need of the 10th Armored Division was more pressing; as throughout the Metz operation, the 95th Division was forced to attack without preliminary bombing and strafing missions. The Division plan was incorporated in Operations Instructions No. 6. All four of the major divisional units were to attack at 1400 November 17 and to drive to the bridges in their zones, the three regiments from the west to the Moselle and Task Force Bacon from the northeast to the Seille.^o In the case of Task Force Bacon, this meant no immediate change in plans. When the operations instructions appeared, the task force was already engaged in this attack, and its activities of November 17 have been described above.

By evening, it had organized defenses on a line Malroy-Chieulles^o-Sanry,^o and plans had been made to continue the attack the next morning against Fort St. Julien^o and St. Julien-les-Metz.^o In the case of the 379th Infantry also, though for different reasons, Operations Instructions No. 6 meant no immediate change of plans. The regiment was still fighting to unite its isolated forces and only when this had been accomplished, at least in part, would it be able to drive for the Moselle and the bridges. But for both the 377th and the 378th Infantry Regiments the order to attack meant a quick change of plans and immediate reorganization.

Colonel Metcalfe,^o commanding the 378th Infantry, was directed at 1030 to attack at 1300 (later changed to 1400) to seize the original Division objective, Hill 225.4, 500 yards northeast of the small town of St. Nicholas^o and about a mile from the Moselle. The 3rd Battalion, which was to make the attack, was defending a long line from Vigneulles^o north to Norroy-le-Veneur^o when the order was received; the battalion immediately began to assemble in the vicinity of Vigneulles^o and the defensive line was turned over to elements of the 1st Battalion and to a detachment of the regimental scouts. One platoon of 81-millimeter mortars and one platoon of heavy machine guns from Company D were attached to the 3rd Battalion for the new operation.

At 1400 Company K jumped off in the attack, with companies I and L echeloned to its right rear. Its first objective was Fort Decaen,^o southeast of Vigneulles,^o and the fort was taken with the aid of the supporting fires of Companies D and M only after the most furious opposition yet encountered by the 3rd Battalion had been overcome. After reorganizing, Company K continued to the southeast and assaulted Hill 225.4 with marching fire. A large number of Germans digging positions for a main line of resistance were caught by surprise, and after a brief struggle the hill was taken. The company then drove on to Devant-les-Ponts, and by 1450 had occupied the town. Two infantry counterattacks were directed against Company K in an attempt to dislodge it, but both were repulsed. The first, with an estimated strength of 150 riflemen, came from the south at 1530, and the second, of 60 to 70 riflemen, came from the east at 1730. Meanwhile, Company I had moved to Lorry-les-Metz^o at 1600 and had been mounted on tanks. It assaulted St. Nicholas^o and entered it from the east at dusk. Fighting continued into the night, but by morning the company had complete control of the town.

Throughout the attack, the 3rd Battalion had received heavy shell-

ing from the 88's in Fort Plappeville." The supply route to Devant-les-Ponts^o could be taken under fire by the fort, and snipers from its garrison could work their way close to the road by moving through the woods to the northeast. Three officers of the 3rd Battalion were killed by '88' fire, and one by a sniper. To alleviate this situation, the 1st Battalion was ordered to attack Fort Plappeville^o November 18, and while it could not be captured it was, as noted above, contained and neutralized. In preparation for a continuation of the 3rd Battalion attack, patrols were sent out the night of November 17-18 to investigate the Moselle bridge at Longeville-les-Metz.^o It was reported still intact, and plans were made to seize it by a fast-moving advance the morning of November 18.

Meanwhile, the 377th Infantry had launched a coordinated attack at the same time as the 378th Infantry and by evening had driven to a position on its left. When the 377th Infantry received the order for the drive to the Moselle, it was reorganizing in preparation for an attack on November 18. On receipt of the order, new plans were immediately made, and it was decided that the 2nd Battalion would launch the attack south from Woippy and that the 3rd Battalion would bypass Fort Gambetta,^o unsuccessfully assaulted the day before, and follow the 2nd Battalion through Woippy.^o

Company G, supported by tanks, moved out in the attack at 1400 with Companies E and F following in a column of companies. By dusk, Company G, using marching fire all the way, had taken Le Sansonnet.^o When it attempted to advance further, three huge explosions occurred to the immediate front, and at the same time it was necessary to withdraw the supporting tanks for refueling. Company G was forced to pull back, but the men were disorganized as a result of the explosions and because of the loss of covering fire from the tanks. As he had the day before, Sgt. Andrew Miller^o played the key role in extricating his company from its predicament. He took the BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) of a wounded comrade and, singlehanded, assaulted a machine gun whose fire was pinning down the lead platoon of Company G. The ferocity of his attack and the accuracy of Miller's^o marksmanship put the crew of the German gun to flight, and the withdrawal of Company G was effected successfully, Sergeant Miller^o being the last man to leave his post.

The 3rd Battalion moved out of La Maxe^o at 1100, and at 1600 it closed in at Woippy.^o At dusk Companies I and K were ordered south to Metz-Nord^o where they took up positions to the left of the 2nd Battalion. Company L remained in Woippy^o in reserve.



Victory Division troops move through Woippy a few hours after the town was seized.

During the night of November 17-18, the 377th Infantry sent forward patrols to investigate the two bridges over the Hafen Canal.^o (The Hafen Canal, connecting at each end with the Moselle, forms an island about 1,000 yards in length and about 200 yards wide, and the 377th Infantry would have to cross both the canal and the island before reaching the Moselle.) A 3rd Battalion patrol moved through Company G positions to reconnoiter the south bridge in the regimental sector. The patrol members encountered no enemy, but about 75 yards from the bridge they discovered a roadblock made of half-inch cable and felled trees. The bridge itself had been blown and was down in the water, but it seemed still passable for foot-troops. A 2nd Battalion patrol reconnoitered the north bridge. During the approach German voices were heard and lights were seen in houses near the canal, and the patrol located an '88' zeroed in on the Woippy road, already known to Division troops as '88 Boulevard'. The north bridge was intact, but the enemy was using it as a route of withdrawal and the 2nd Battalion men were unable to cross it.

Consequently by evening of November 17, the 95th Division was in a position to strike for the heart of Metz. The 377th and the 378th Infantry regiments had driven to within less than a thousand yards of the Moselle and patrols had ascertained that the Germans had not yet blown the bridges. Task Force Bacon, east of the Moselle, was preparing to attack Fort St. Julien,^o little more than a mile northeast of the city. Elsewhere on the XX Corps front, progress had been satisfactory. In the north, the 10th Armored Division, in a fluid situation, was advancing rapidly and at one point was only six miles from the Saar. The 90th Division was pushing steadily south against moderate opposition. In the south, the 5th Infantry Division had driven past the Verdun Group^o on the east and was moving into position before Fort Quenleu,^o just outside the southern suburbs of Metz.

Throughout the day and evening of November 17, both the XX Corps and the 95th Division were making plans for the final stages of the Metz operation. The XX Corps was particularly anxious to close the German escape gap east of Metz, and General Walker^o urged that the main body of Task Force Bacon drive to the east rather than to the west of Fort Bellecroix^o in order to make contact with the 5th Division. It proved impractical to make this change in plans, but the 95th Reconnaissance Troop, one of the components of Task Force Bacon, was directed to establish contact with the 5th Division at Vallieres,^o a small town two miles northeast of Metz. The XX Corps

appeared to have confidence that the F.F.I. would succeed in preventing German demolition of the Moselle bridges and had no immediate plan for forcing the crossing if these were blown; Corps would grant permission for the final assault over the Moselle into Metz, but the planning and the motive force were at Division level. General Twaddle^o directed the 320th Engineer Battalion to have assault boats available, and by late afternoon Company A had 30 boats at Woippy.^o Liaison was maintained with both the 377th and the 378th Infantry Regiments, and the boats would be allotted according to need.

THE DRIVE TO THE RIVERS

November 18

The morning of November 18, the 95th Division drove toward the Moselle and the Seille,^o ready to take advantage of any bridgehead which might be gained across the rivers into Metz. In describing the drive to the rivers, the southern section of the battle line, held by the 379th Infantry, will be considered first. It will be remembered that the 379th Infantry had launched its attack through the great southeastern forts on November 14. The attacking elements had broken through the German lines, but these lines had closed behind them and for a time neither reinforcements nor supplies were able to reach the forward positions through normal channels. Accordingly, the first aim of the regiment was to open a supply route to its forces and to unite them. By the afternoon of November 17, this had been partially accomplished by the union of the 2nd and 3rd battalions and by the opening of the main regimental supply route to these units. Plans were made to continue the attack with the 1st and 3rd battalions the next morning.

The 1st Battalion was on the right and the 3rd Battalion on the left. In the 1st Battalion sector, Company A was to attack on the right, Company B on the left and Companies C and D were to be left as a holding force in the forts the 1st Battalion had captured the first day of the attack. Company A jumped off at 0630 and moved in a column of platoons to the high ground above Vaux^o and Jussy.^o The two towns were attacked and both fell with little opposition. Company B also jumped off at 0630 and moved northeast with the mission of cutting the two roads leading to Fort Jeanne d'Arc^o from the south. When this had been accomplished the company turned east and moved into the towns of Rozerieulles^o and Ste. Ruffine.^o Here Company B took up defensive positions, and Company A passed through Company B toward Moulins-les-Metz.^o During the afternoon Company A gained control of Moulins,^o its final objective, but the Moselle bridge there had already been blown.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion had also jumped off before dawn and

attacked Chatel St. Germain^o as its initial objective. Continuing its attack, the battalion took Maison Neuve^o and Lessy.^o Finally, it advanced against Scy-Chazelles.^o The town was taken after moderate opposition, but fighting continued for several days as the Germans sent individuals and patrols into Scy-Chazelles^o from near-by Fort St. Quentin.^o While the 1st and 3rd Battalions were attacking, the 2nd Battalion remained in position on the high ground east of Fort Jeanne d'Arc^o and early November 19 moved to join the other battalions at Maison Neuve.^o Since the bridge at Moulins^o had been blown and since the sector to the front of the 379th Infantry was unfavorable for an assault boat crossing, Division decided that the 379th Infantry would not take part in the drive over the river. The evening of November 18, the regimental commander Colonel Clifford P. Chapman was directed to mop up the area around his supply route and to keep his units available for movement on Division order. Permission was requested of Third Army Headquarters to use available F.F.I. forces to contain Forts Driant^o and Jeanne^o d'Arc, but the request was refused. Consequently, the 379th Infantry had to maintain defenses to the rear and along its supply routes at the same time that it was attempting to clean out the area between the forts and the Moselle.

The 378th Regiment, north of the 379th Infantry, attacked with the 3rd Battalion at 0730 November 18; its primary objective was the Moselle bridge at Longeville-les-Metz,^o which patrols had reported intact the night before. Artillery and the combined weapons of Companies M and D supported the attack, and the 81-millimeter mortars provided a two-hour continuous smoke screen to protect the advance from the guns of Forts Plappeville^o and St. Quentin.^o Company I, mounted on tanks, was in the lead, with Company L echeloned to the right rear. At 0820, Company I reached the bridge, and its furious fire drove back the German squad defending the west end. The lead platoon began to cross, and five men reached the opposite bank. But the demolition switch was in a building a hundred yards back from the river, and the Germans were able to blow the bridge, killing eight Company I men on it. The five men isolated on the far side ran for cover, and the remainder of Company I maintained fire against German positions on the east bank. (The five men who had crossed the bridge before it was blown were brought back to the west of the Moselle by assault boat in the late afternoon during a lull in the fire-fight.) Company L, following to the right rear of Company I in the advance, came through Longeville^o and captured a few Germans who had been cut off, and the remainder of the 3rd Battalion moved up to positions near the Moselle. Plans were made to force a crossing

of the Moselle on November 19, and since the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry was still engaged at Fort Plappeville,^o the attack was again entrusted to the 3rd Battalion.

The 377th Infantry, on the left of the 378th Infantry, spent the night of November 17-18 in the Metz suburbs of Sansonnet^o and Metz-Nord.^o At 0730 November 18, the 2nd Battalion jumped off in the attack with Company G leading. Its initial objective was the north bridge over the Hafen Canal,^o the bridge which the Germans had been using as a route of withdrawal the night before. The company worked its way down '88 Boulevard' to a short distance from the bridge and came under fire from an '88', from machine guns and from 20-millimeter dual-purpose guns on the island. The attached tanks knocked out the machine guns and forced the crew of the '88' to flee, and Companies G and E fought their way down the street to the bridge. Company E held up on the north side of the canal and reorganized for a possible assault boat crossing of the Moselle. Company G found that the canal bridge had been damaged but could still be used, and at 1000 the first elements crossed to the island. By 1045 the entire company was on the island, and all resistance had been reduced. Engineers, who were brought up to remove the demolitions still remaining on the bridge, were able to repair it so that jeeps could cross.

Meanwhile, Companies I and K of the 3rd Battalion had been prepared to follow the 2nd Battalion in the attack, while Company L remained in Woippy^o and reorganized. In the early morning, Company I, mopping up in Metz-Nord,^o captured 175 Germans in a huge barracks. Later, Companies I and K moved down to the island and joined the 2nd Battalion. At noon, Colonel Gaillard^o informed Division that both battalions were on the island, that it had been completely cleared and that over 200 prisoners had been taken on it. General Twaddle^o directed Colonel Gaillard^o to force a crossing of the Moselle if in his opinion the losses would not be excessive and informed him that 15 assault boats were available. Shortly afterwards, however, the Germans began to set up machine guns and mortars on the east bank of the Moselle, and by 1600 Colonel Gaillard^o had decided to postpone the assault crossing until November 19.

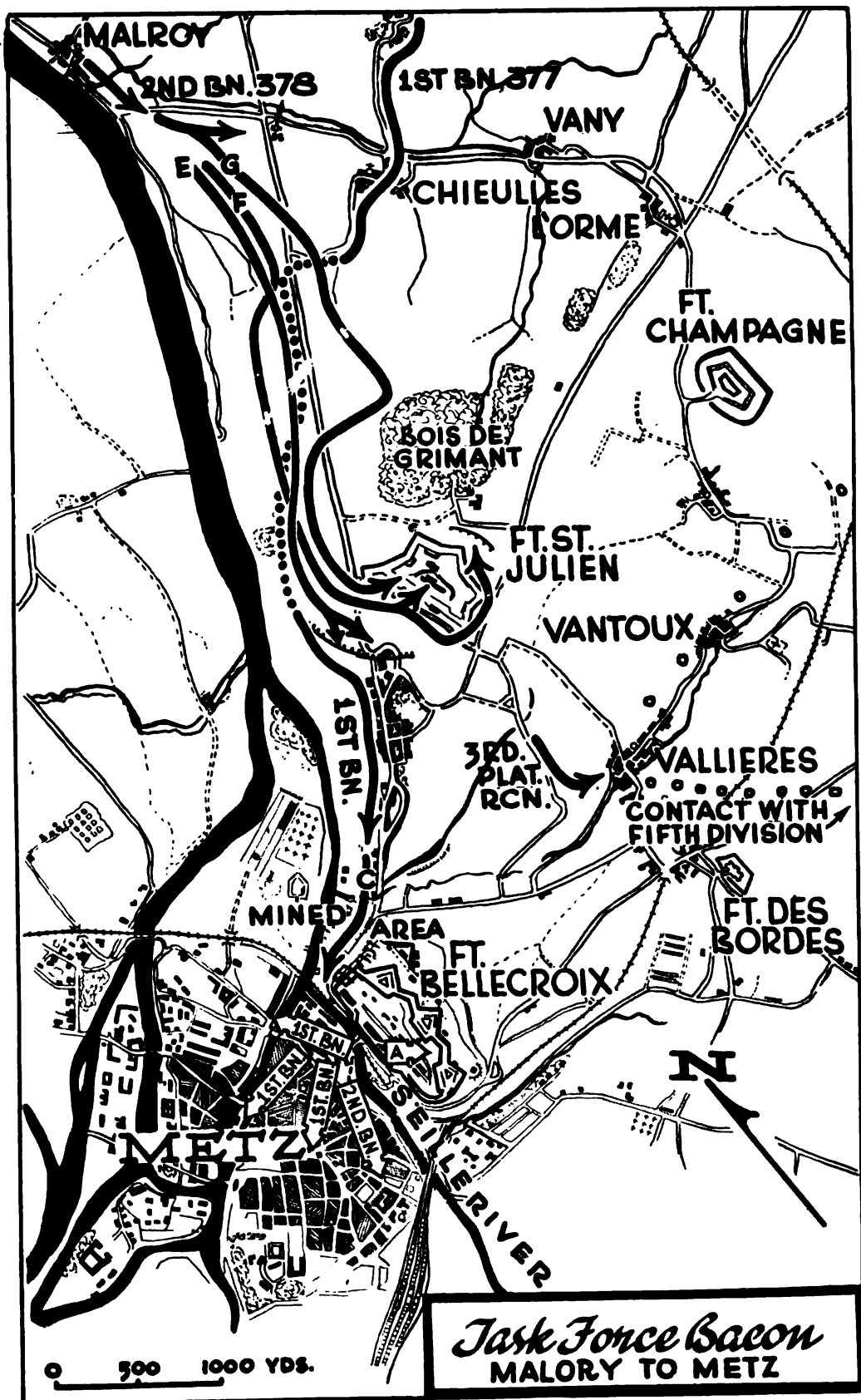
While the 377th and 378th Infantry Regiments were driving to the Moselle from the west, Task Force Bacon was advancing toward the Seille on the east. On November 17, the task force had approached to within striking distance of Fort St. Julien^o and had pulled back for an all-out attack the next day. The plan for November 18 was that the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry would attack Fort St. Julien^o from the rear at 0700. At the same time, the 1st Battalion 377th In-

fantry would bypass the fort and assault the town of St. Julien-les-Metz,^o going in shooting. Once the town was taken, the 1st Battalion would continue and investigate Fort Bellecroix.^o Finally, if time permitted, the task force would attack to force crossings of the Seille^o into Metz.

At 0600, Company E of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry moved out of Malroy^o and took up positions at the southwestern end of Fort St. Julien^o to protect the battalion flank. Company F, at 0615, moved off the main road into the woods on the west preparatory to an attack on positions which Company E patrols had discovered the night before. Finally, Company G, moving out at 0630, advanced to the left of Company F. At 0700, all three companies were approaching the fort and all were under heavy small arms, mortar and artillery fire. Company F pressed the attack and assaulted a bunker and two pillboxes. Twelve Germans were killed, and 18 were captured before the positions were finally reduced. Meanwhile, Company G had come under the direct fire of a 20-millimeter gun and of two machine guns. The company placed holding fire on them until Company F had finished its operation to the right and then moved in from the west flank. A bayonet charge liquidated the resistance; two Germans were killed and an officer and eight men surrendered. A platoon from Company G continued toward the fort against what appeared to be a group of snipers. Actually, two pillboxes were located and both were reduced, yielding 30 prisoners. The platoon then took up defensive positions to protect the north flank of the battalion. During this Company G action, Company F had moved along the main road, clearing all buildings outside the walls of the fort.

At 1300, a coordinated attack was launched against the fort itself with Company G on the left and Company F on the right, and by 1330 the advance elements had reached the moat which was the principal obstacle to the capture of Fort St. Julien.^o The moat was crossed at one point only, by a bridge and causeway leading to a solid steel gate of the main fort. The causeway was protected by a fortified courtyard, surrounded by two-foot-thick concrete walls equipped with firing slits, and within the courtyard were three pillboxes.

A platoon of Company F and one of Company G stormed the courtyard. Despite the small arms and machine gun fire coming from the main fort less than 50 yards away, the two platoons cleared the courtyard and reduced the three pillboxes. During the action, the heavy machine guns of Company H and the light machine guns of Company F maintained accurate fire on the firing slits of the fortified courtyard. In the meantime, the 3rd platoon of Company F had completely



circled the fort in an attempt to find another entrance, but none was found and the moat was under fire for its whole length. Entrance would have to be made through the steel gate which had so far resisted all demolition efforts of the two platoons in the courtyard.

Capt. Robert E. Adair,^o commanding Company F, called for direct fire artillery support. Two light tanks were run into the courtyard and sprayed the windows from which fire could cover the entrance. A 90-millimeter tank destroyer was ridden by its crew into the courtyard and at a range of 50 yards opened up on the steel door with armor-piercing as well as high explosive ammunition. Meanwhile, two assault platoons were ready to rush the fort once the gate had fallen. However, the tank destroyer's fire could do no more than pierce small holes in the metal and it was withdrawn. Later in the afternoon, one of the 155-millimeter self-propelled guns newly attached to Task Force Bacon was brought forward under similar conditions. It fired 10 rounds at point-blank range into the steel door and another 20 rounds into the archway which supported it. The door collapsed and the archway was demolished. By this time, however, it was dark, and entrance to the fort was postponed until daylight. Patrols were given the mission of containing the fort and of preventing any enemy withdrawal, and plans were made for completing the operation November 19.

The task force plan for November 18 had called for the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry to bypass Fort St. Julien^o and to push on into the town of St. Julien-les-Metz.^o The battalion met heavy mortar fire north of its objective and was halted until the early afternoon. It then placed its tank destroyers in the lead and moved into St. Julien-les-Metz^o at 1330 against moderate resistance. Continuing on its mission, the battalion sent Company A to attack Fort Bellecroix^o from the west. The attack was successful after a series of small skirmishes, and the prisoners captured were taken through Company C to the rear. Company C was advancing along the road skirting the north end of the fort when, at about 1500, a terrific explosion blew up the north portion of the fort and part of the adjoining road. The leading elements of Company C caught the full force of the blast; eight men were killed and 49 wounded. It was necessary for the main body of battalion to pull back to St. Julien-les-Metz^o to reorganize and to care for the blast casualties.

While the two infantry battalions of Task Force Bacon were engaged against Forts St. Julien^o and Bellecroix,^o the 95th Reconnaissance Troop had driven southeast to the town of Vallieres^o where it was to make contact with the 5th Infantry Division. No. 5th Division elements appeared November 18, but Corps informed the 95th



Aftermath of the German's infamous Fort Bellecroix explosion. Leading elements of Company C 377th Infantry (Task Force Bacon) caught the full force of the blast which killed eight, wounded forty-nine.

Division that they were expected the next day. During the night of November 18-19, Corps set up a second contact point at Vaudreville,^o east of Vallieres;^o here contact was to be established not only with the 5th Division but with the 90th Division as well. By the evening of November 18, the 5th Division had reached the outskirts of Metz both on the southwest and the southeast; east of the city it held Borny,^o a mile southeast of the contact point at Vallieres.^o The 90th Division had made rapid progress south in its zone and had advanced to a line east of Malroy.^o

On November 18 the three infantry regiments of the 95th Division had driven to the Moselle with the mission of seizing the Metz bridges intact and of crossing over them into the city. However, before the Americans could reach the river, the Germans had destroyed every bridge but one, and the only remaining bridge, at Longeville,^o was blown while the forward elements of the 378th Infantry were crossing. At 0835 a liaison plane observer from the 282nd Field Artillery Battalion reported to Division that all bridges over the Moselle into Metz in the Division zone were demolished, and at 0905 a liaison plane from the 360th Field Artillery Battalion confirmed the report. On November 18, no definite information was available on the bridges across the Seille^o in the Task Force Bacon zone, but it was assumed that the Germans would blow these, too, before Division troops could seize them.

Accordingly, while the drive to the river was being completed, further preparations were made for the assault boat and bridging operations now necessary. At 1100 the Division chemical officer, Lt. Col. Thomas W. Crosby,^o was directed to move the smoke generators, then in use at Uckange,^o to Semecourt^o and to hold them in readiness for possible employment at Metz. At 1400 arrangements were made with Corps to have heavy bridging equipment sent down to Rombas,^o about ten miles north-northwest of Metz, in order that the engineers might be able to pick it up quickly when Corps so directed. Meanwhile, Division engineers had made a reconnaissance of an old ferry site just north of Malroy^o and found it suitable for bridging.

Consequently, when the regiments were ready to cross the Moselle they would have assault boats and smoke generators available, and when the crossing had been effected bridges would be put into support them. (The plan called for one Bailey bridge in the zone of Task Force Bacon and for one Bailey bridge and one heavy pontoon bridge in the zone of the 377th Infantry.) None of the divisional units were prepared to cross November 18, and the plans were made for a coordinated crossing operation at 1130 November 19 by the 377th and 378th Infantry regiments across the Moselle from the west and by Task Force Bacon across the Seille from the east.

THE 379th INFANTRY WEST OF THE MOSELLE

November 19-23

The 379th Infantry, at the southern extremity of the Division sector, was not in a position to take part in the Moselle crossing, and the evening of November 18 Colonel Chapman^o had been instructed to mop up the area around his supply route and to establish contact with the 378th Infantry. The accomplishment of this mission and the further operations of the 379th Infantry in the Metz area will be described before the account of the drive across the Moselle and Seille rivers into Metz by the 377th and 378th Infantry Regiments and Task Force Bacon.

The morning of November 19, the 1st Battalion 379th Infantry was in Moulins-les-Metz^o and the 3rd Battalion was in Scy-Chazelles;^o the 2nd Battalion moved down from the high ground east of Fort Jeanne d'Arc^o to Maison Neuve.^o While all three battalions were mopping up in their areas, a detachment of 30 men accompanied by two tank destroyers moved out to make contact with the 378th Infantry; by 1100 contact between the two regiments had been established at Longeville-les-Metz.^o During the afternoon, the 379th Infantry continued to clean out resistance in the regimental sector. Particular emphasis was placed on the towns to the southwest; Ars-sur-Moselle^o was taken by the 2nd Battalion, and Fort Driant^o was now completely surrounded.

Meanwhile, the 378th Infantry had been attacking Fort Plappeville^o and the two small forts between it and Fort St. Quentin.¹⁰ In the morning of November 19, the 378th Infantry requested and obtained a boundary change giving them St. Quentin^o as well. However, all the forts continued to resist, and in the afternoon the 378th Infantry requested that it be permitted to withdraw from them and to turn them over to the 379th Infantry. On November 19 the 379th Infantry was too heavily engaged in its mopping up operation to undertake this additional mission, but in the evening General Faith directed Colonel Chapman^o to take over the containing of St. Quentin^o

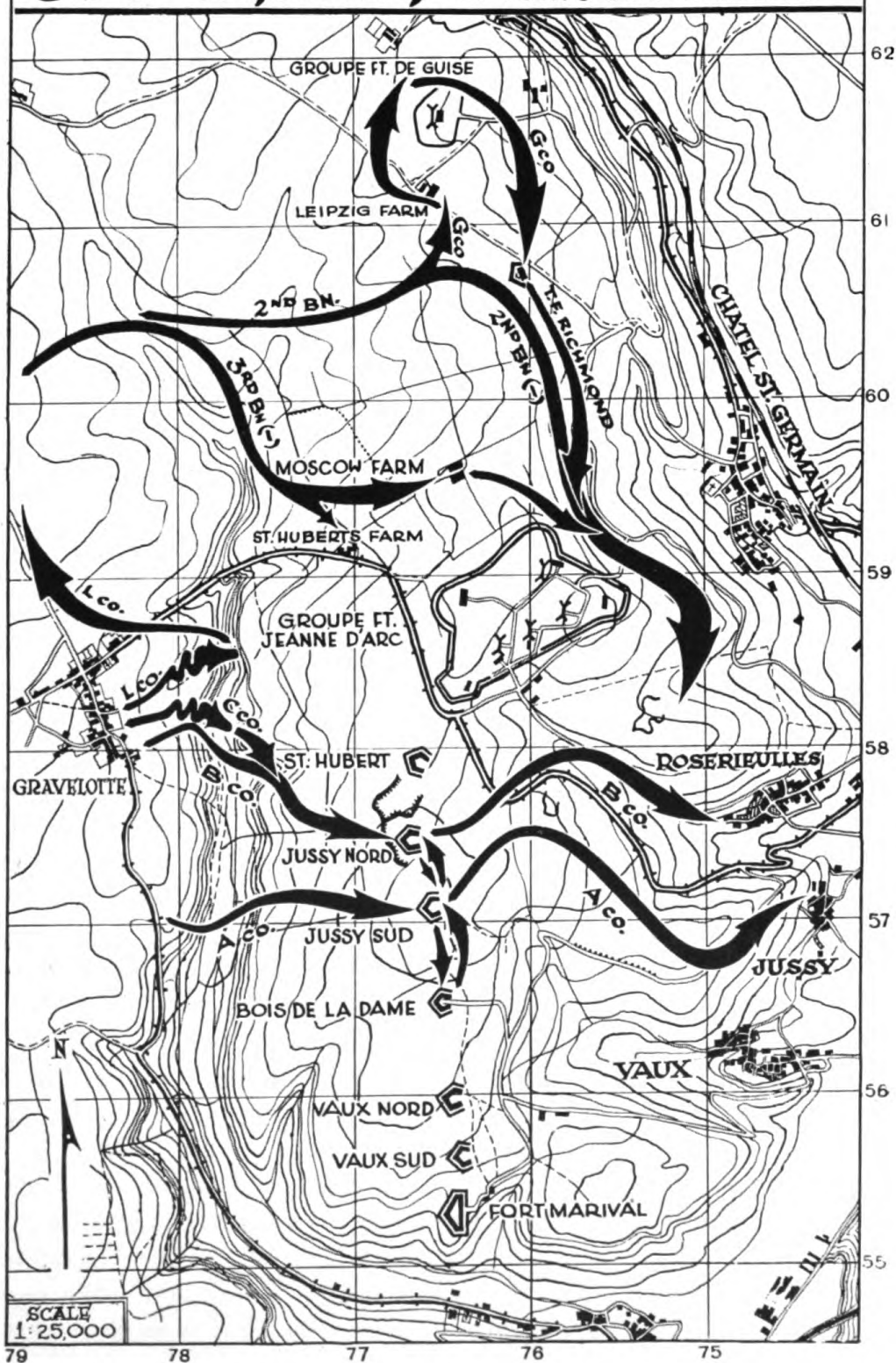
by 1000 November 20. It was estimated that a force of battalion strength would be necessary to neutralize and contain Fort St. Quentin.^o During the morning of November 20, Operations Instructions No. 7 vastly increased the mission of the 379th Infantry. Not later than 0730 November 21, the regiment was to launch an attack and successively capture and mop up Fort Plappeville,^o two bunkers between Forts Plappeville^o and St. Quentin,^o Fort St. Quentin,^o Fort Jeanne d'Arc,^o seven bunkers between Fort Jeanne d'Arc and Fort Driant,^o and Fort Driant. The maximum use of supporting fires was to be made in order to effect capture or surrender. However, the operations instructions were explicit on one point: "No fortification will be assaulted in the face of heavy enemy fire or enemy fire that will result in excessive casualties."

In accord with these directives, the 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry relieved the 378th Infantry at Fort St. Quentin^o by 0730 November 20, and elements of the 1st Battalion relieved the same regiment at Fort Plappeville^o early November 21. At 0730 November 21 the 1st Battalion launched the attack ordered by the operations instructions and made an attempt to reduce Fort Plappeville.^o However, since artillery proved ineffective against the garrison holding out underground and since Division had forbidden direct assault against heavy enemy fire, Fort Plappeville^o continued to resist. As the other forts in the regimental zone were in an equally strong position, the 379th Infantry could do no more than to reduce all opposition outside the forts, which it quickly accomplished, and to contain the garrisons while other means of eliminating the forts were tried.

Prisoners of war taken from the fortifications were agreed that artillery was of little use against them, but several had suggested that aerial bombing might be more effective. An air mission was arranged for Fort Plappeville^o November 21, and the Division was told that a squadron of fighter bombers carrying 1,000-pound bombs would be employed. Accordingly, the 379th Infantry withdrew its troops from within the barbed wire entanglements around the fort at 1400. However, the mission did not materialize and at 1700 the troops were returned to their original positions.

Propaganda broadcasts were also used against the three main forts, Plappeville,^o St. Quentin^o and Jeanne d'Arc.^o At Fort Plappeville^o the German commander was willing to meet regimental representatives and conferred with the regimental intelligence officer and a member of the Interrogation of Prisoners of War Team. Nevertheless, the commander, a German field artillery colonel, refused to surrender until his food and ammunition were exhausted or until he were

379TH Infantry DRIVES THROUGH THE LINE OF FORTS S.W. OF METZ.



driven out by force; the one result of the conference was the arrangement of a truce for the evacuation of casualties.

Late November 21, the 379th Infantry received warning orders of its impending relief by elements of the 5th Infantry Division; the regiment was to maintain supporting fires, but it was to keep its infantry unentangled. The regiment's outlying forces were withdrawn as quickly as practicable. Elements of Companies C and D left Forts Jussy Nord^o and Jussy Sud^o early November 22 and moved to the vicinity of Ste. Ruffine.^o Meanwhile, the entire regiment prepared for movement to the vicinity of Peltre,^o about four miles southeast of Metz. At 1000 November 23 the relief was initiated, and at 1700 command passed to the commanding officer of the 2nd Infantry Regiment. Finally, just after midnight November 23, the last detachments of the 379th Infantry were withdrawn from Moscow Farm,^o St. Hubert's Farm,^o the bunker south of Fort de Guise, and Fort de Guise.^o

The 379th Infantry turned over to the 5th Division seven forts which it had been containing. Six of the forts eventually capitulated to the 5th Division. The seventh, Fort Jeanne d'Arc,^o surrendered to Task Force Pickett, which later relieved the 5th Division in that sector. The following list contains the names of the forts, the size of the garrisons as estimated by the 379th Infantry November 21 and the dates the forts finally fell:

Fort Plappeville ^o	200 men—December 7
Fort St. Quentin ^o	600 men—December 6
Fort Jeanne d'Arc ^o	500 men—December 9
Fort Driant ^o	700 men—December 8
Fort Bois de la Dame ^o	100 men—November 26
Fort Marival ^o	50 men—November 26
Fort St. Hubert ^o	50 men—November 26

THE CROSSING OF THE RIVERS

November 19

On November 19 the 95th Division crossed the last barriers which lay between it and the heart of Metz, the Moselle on the west and the Seille on the east. The Moselle was crossed in the south by the 378th Infantry at Longeville-les-Metz and in the north by the 377th Infantry at the lower end of the Hafen Canal;^o the Seille was crossed by Task Force Bacon near Fort Bellecroix.^o

The 378th Infantry was to land on St. Symphorien Island (Ile Saint^o Symphorien), and a hasty reconnaissance of the crossing site had been made the afternoon of November 18. Assault boats were to be used, and the engineers arrived with these early November 19. Since the 1st Battalion was still engaged at Fort Plappeville the operation was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, which was strengthened by additional supporting artillery and additional attached heavy weapons. Company L on the right and Company I on the left would make the initial crossing, and they would be supported by the fires of two battalions of artillery, a company of tanks, two platoons of 57-millimeter anti-tank guns, two 81-millimeter mortar platoons, three platoons of heavy machine guns and a provisional platoon of .50 caliber machine guns. The crossing coordinated with the operations of the 377th Infantry and of Task Force Bacon, was to begin at 1130 after a previous feint to throw the enemy off balance.

The tremendous fire power of the supporting weapons disorganized German resistance on St. Symphorien Island.^o The crossing was successful, and the two companies were able to advance rapidly across the island in a skirmish line. When the Moselle Canal east of the island was reached, it was found that the bridge had been blown and that another crossing operation would be necessary. Accordingly, some of the assault boats were dragged across the island, and a motley collection of pleasure canoes and other light craft were gathered from the canal. Before the second crossing could be made, it was necessary to establish liaison with Corps and with the 5th

Division on a boundary change. Originally, Metz had been in the zone of the 95th Division, but by a boundary change of November 14, the portion of the city east of the Moselle Canal was assigned to the 5th Division. However, battles are not fought by boundaries alone, and when it appeared that the 95th Division might be in a position to cross the Moselle Canal before the 5th Division had cleared its portion of Metz, Corps set up a provisional boundary, effective on Corps order, increasing the 95th Division zone. When the 378th Infantry had successfully cleared St. Symphorien Island,⁹ Corps put the provisional boundary into effect at 1340 November 19, and the 5th Division was notified that the 95th Division would swing east into Metz.¹

When these arrangements had been completed, the crossing of the canal was begun at 1700. Company L crossed in the first assault wave, while Company I set up a base of fire. Resistance was moderate and by dark several blocks had been cleared. Company I followed Company L across the canal, and during the night the battalion command post group moved into Metz. Meanwhile, the afternoon of November 19, Company K had crossed the Moselle and spent the night on St. Symphorien Island.⁹ A psychological warfare sound truck was brought to the island; the hopelessness of the situation was explained to the enemy and were given instructions. All civilians were to keep out of sight, and sniping would be punished by death.

Meanwhile, the 377th Infantry, north of the 378th Infantry, had also driven across the Moselle into the heart of the city. The 2nd Battalion was given the mission of initiating the crossing, and plans were made for its companies to move in the order E, F and G. The crossing was begun under difficult conditions. At the last minute a change was made in the crossing site, and the supporting fires of mortar and artillery were directed against the wrong area. In addition, the first boats were forced to move north down the Hafen Canal to the junction of the canal and the Moselle. Opposing small arms and machine gun fire was heavy and there were many casualties in the first boats. However, a change was made in the launching site; the later boats were loaded at the junction of the canal and the Moselle, and casualties were materially reduced for Companies F and G. Once ashore, the advance elements began to clean out the sector. Resistance was heavy at first, but it soon became lighter, consisting primarily of sniper and occasional machine gun fire. By 1530 the bulk of the 2nd Battalion was across the Moselle, and an area 200 yards east of the river had been cleared. One hundred prisoners

¹The new boundary, as it was worked out, ran along the Moselle Canal to the point where Symphorien-Strasse crossed St. Symphorien Island,⁹ then southeast to the railroad, north along the railroad to Fort Bellecroix⁹ and then northeast to Vallieres.⁹

had already been sent back in assault boats, and 200 more had been taken.

The 3rd Battalion initially took up a position behind the 2nd Battalion and supported with fire the crossing operation. Late in the afternoon, Company I crossed the Moselle while the remainder of the battalion made preparations to cross the following morning. During the morning the 3rd Battalion had sent a patrol from Company L to investigate Fort Gambetta,^o which the battalion had at heavy cost but unsuccessfully assaulted November 16. In the afternoon the patrol reported the fort deserted, and it was possible to evacuate the Americans killed in the assault, 47 bodies being recovered.

Task Force Bacon had on November 18 begun the reduction of Fort St. Julien,^o taken St. Julien-les-Metz,^o and captured Fort Bellecroix.^o On November 19 the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry completed the reduction of Fort St. Julien,^o and the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry spearheaded the entrance of the task force into Metz by seizing intact a bridge across the Seille.

The 2nd Battalion launched its final attack on Fort St. Julien^o at 0630, when 1st Lt. Gerald Macy^o and T/Sgt. Elroy J. Rautmann,^o leading the 3rd platoon of Company F, slipped into the fort. Just inside the gate, they surprised a German master sergeant placing 12 men in firing positions. While Lieutenant Macy,^o with the remainder of the 3rd platoon and with the 2nd platoon, which had by then entered the fort, made a tour of the firing positions on the perimeter of St. Julien,^o Sergeant Rautmann^o forced the captured German master sergeant, at bayonet point, to take him to the major commanding the fort. Sergeant Rautmann^o demanded and received the surrender of Fort St. Julien.^o Three hundred and sixty-two prisoners were captured, and the major defensive works of the fort were blown by the engineers.

Meanwhile the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry had driven across the Seille into Metz. The original plan called for a crossing operation with assault boats, but for some reason the bridge at the south end of Fort Bellecroix^o was not blown and the battalion was able to seize it intact. During the morning of November 19, Company B regrouped for the attack, and the bridge was kept under surveillance by a forward observation post. Initially, the bridge was completely undefended, but later the Germans brought up a small group with one machine gun to defend it. The observation post held its fire, since it appeared that the Germans were unaware of the nearness of the Americans. Soon, however, a two and one-half ton truck with assault boats drove into the area covered by the machine gun and was fired on. The observation post also opened fire and was suc-

cessful in killing or wounding the German machine gun crew. The remainder of the defenders fled, and no further attempt was made by the Germans to hold the bridge. Accordingly, at 1130, Company B moved across the bridge with the support of a platoon of tanks and began to fan out against initially still opposition. The remainder of the battalion followed it across, and by evening had cleaned out a large part of its assigned zone.

After the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry had completed the reduction of Fort St. Julien^o and had made preparations for demolishing it, the battalion was alerted to cross into Metz over the bridge the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry had seized. The 2nd Battalion accordingly moved into the city and began to clean out the southern portion of the Task Force Bacon zone. At dark the battalion organized defensive positions for the night, and plans were made to resume the attack in the morning. During the night, information reached the battalion that a Gestapo headquarters in the city was still occupied. It was feared that it might be evacuated before daylight, so two tank destroyers, protected by two platoons of Company G, were led through the sniper-infested streets to the neighborhood of the headquarters. There, at point blank range, 20 rounds of high explosive ammunition were poured into the buildings before the tank destroyers were withdrawn to the night positions of the 2nd Battalion.

The 95th Reconnaissance Troop, under command of Capt. Moses M. Culter, the left unit of Task Force Bacon, had sent patrols to Vallieres^o the morning of November 18 to make contact with the 5th Division. Elements of the 5th Division drove north to Vallieres^o early November 19; at 1110 contact was made between the two divisions, and the circle around Metz was closed. Later in the day, XX Corps directed Task Force Bacon to make contact with the 5th Division at a second point, the railroad triangle immediately south of Fort Bellecroix.^o Troops from the task force were sent there, but 5th Division artillery fire forced them to withdraw the night of November 19-20, and it was not until November 20 that permanent contact was established.

THE LAST DAYS

November 20-22

By the evening of November 19, Metz had been encircled and the city was doomed. Contact had been made between the 5th and 95th divisions east of the city, and contact was soon to be made between the 5th and the 90th divisions. Within the city, the 5th Division was making progress against stubborn house-to-house opposition in the southern portion, and three regimental forces of the 95th Division were fighting in the heart of Metz. Large-scale and coordinated actions were no longer to be expected of the enemy, but there were still many German troops in Metz and there was to be bitter fighting, particularly in the 377th Infantry zone, against isolated pockets of resistance.

The 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry continued its attack into the center of Metz at dawn November 20. Opposition was light, and hundreds of the enemy surrendered to the advancing troops without a fight. At 0845 contact was made with elements of the 377th Infantry on the left, and by 0930 contact had been made with the 11th Infantry of the 5th Division on the right along the Division boundary. By 1100 the 3rd Battalion had taken its final objective, the main railroad station in the southeast section of the city, and had completely cleaned out the 378th Infantry zone in Metz. Finally, at 1230, the 3rd Battalion was also in contact with Task Force Bacon.

Since the 377th Infantry met far more obstinate opposition than that encountered by the 378th Infantry, the 378th Infantry was directed to take over territory originally assigned to the 377th Infantry between the canal and the zone of Task Force Bacon. Accordingly, Company I was dispatched to the new area and by dark it had been completely cleared.

The elements of Task Force Bacon had largely completed the clearing of their zone in Metz November 19. By noon November 20, both the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry and the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry were able to announce the end of resistance in their assigned sectors,

and Task Force Bacon's operations in the city were at an end. Meanwhile, the 95th Reconnaissance Troop, which had provided forward and flank reconnaissance for the task force on its rapid drive down the Moselle, cleaned out a number of towns east of Metz. The 1st platoon cleared Vremy^o and Faily;^o in addition, it seized 32 carloads of ammunition prepared for demolition which the Germans were guarding in a railroad tunnel between Faily^o and Nouilly.^o The 2nd platoon cleared five towns, of which the largest was Servignyles-Ste-Barbe,^o and took 40 prisoners. The two platoons then joined for an attack on Fort Champagne,^o a little more than a mile east of Fort St. Julien,^o but the fort fell without a fight. The 3rd platoon, which was patrolling out of Vallieres,^o reduced several isolated pockets of resistance in its sector and took more than 50 prisoners during the day. On November 21, the reconnaissance troop, with the exception of a section of the 3rd platoon which maintained liaison with the 5th Division, moved into Metz with the other elements of Task Force Bacon. At 1200 November 22, Task Force Bacon was dissolved. The 1st Battalion 377th Infantry and the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry reverted to their parent units, and the 95th Reconnaissance Troop moved out in preparation for long range reconnaissance east of Metz.

On November 20, the 10th Infantry Regiment of the 5th Division, fighting in the southern portion of Metz, reduced all organized resistance in its sector and nothing remained to be done except to conduct a house-to-house search for isolated soldiers hiding out to escape. As had been the case with the 379th Infantry, the 5th Division had surrounded and bypassed a number of forts, and these continued to hold out for a short time. The most important were Fort Quenleu^o (capitulated November 21), the Verdun Group^o (capitulated November 26) and Fort St. Privat^o (capitulated with approximately 500 men November 29).

The story of the fighting in Metz, November 20-22, is therefore largely the story of the reduction of the center of the city by the 377th Infantry. The 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry and Company I of the 3rd Battalion had crossed the Moselle into Metz November 19, and preparations had been made to resume the attack early November 20. At 0700 the 3rd Battalion resumed its crossing operation, and during the morning Companies K and L joined Company I on Chambiere Island^o (Ile Chambiere), an island formed by the Moselle on the west and the Moselle canal on the east.

At 0700 the 2nd Battalion jumped off in the attack with the mission of cleaning out the northern portion of Chambiere Island.^o Progress was held up by numerous snipers, and it proved necessary to search

every building before advancing beyond it. In addition, there were numerous machine gun positions which had to be cleaned out. For example, a machine gun located in one of the many Metz barracks had been zeroed in on the building occupied by Company G and on the street along which Companies G and F were attacking. All attempts to knock out the gun failed until Sergeant Miller^o of Company G made his way with a bazooka to the roof of the building and, despite continuing enemy machine gun fire, succeeded in scoring a direct hit on the gun which had been holding up the two companies. German medics appeared and pleaded for a truce to evacuate the wounded. Sergeant Miller,^o acting as interpreter, arranged the truce and at the same time emphasized to the Germans the hopelessness of their position. In about 10 minutes a huge white flag appeared, and a long line of enemy soldiers, hands clasped over their heads, came out to surrender. This surrender led to the collapse of resistance in the 2nd Battalion zone, and several hundred prisoners were taken in the next hours.

Accordingly, the 2nd Battalion was able to push across Chambiere Island^o to the canal by evening, and there remained only one or two small pockets of resistance in the battalion zone. All of these were cleaned out November 21, and the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry operation at Metz was concluded.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion had begun operations in the southern part of Chambiere Island.^o Here opposition was much more severe, and progress was slower. On November 20, Company I, which had crossed the Moselle the evening before, fought its way south along the Moselle and by evening had reached the Kaserne (the Mudra Kaserne,^o or barracks) which was to prove the most important center of resistance in the city. The building across the street from the Kaserne was taken, and the company remained here the night of November 20-21, directing harassing fire against the barracks. Companies K and L crossed the Moselle the morning of November 20 but took little part in the day's fighting. By evening they had moved to positions from which the attack could be continued next day; Company K was to the left of Company I and prepared to advance south, and Company L was in the center of Chambiere Island near a church known to be occupied by the enemy.

Company I assaulted the Kaserne^o early November 21. Against little opposition the company gained control of the first floor, taking approximately 200 prisoners. However, the Germans resisted stubbornly in the second and third floors, and attempts to dislodge them from within were without success, although Company I gained a foothold on the second floor. Finally, a tank was brought up and

its accurate fire quickly destroyed the upper part of the Kaserne and led the defenders to surrender. It had been hoped, on the basis of prisoner reports, that General Kittel, commandant of Fortress Metz, would be captured in the Kaserne. It proved, however, that he had escaped, though wounded, during the previous night to a tobacco factory, partly converted to a hospital, to the south.

Company L had little difficulty in capturing the church which was its initial objective for November 21. Grenades were thrown in the open doorway, and when the Germans slammed the door shut, bazooka fire soon opened it. A tank was moved up and fired 10 rounds into the church at point-blank range. The Germans in the church surrendered, and Company L continued with the mission of clearing the eastern portion of Chambiere^o Island. Despite occasional pockets of stubborn resistance, progress was rapid and by evening the company had reached the east-west canal which bounds Chambiere Island on the south.

Company K fought its way south in the western section of Chambiere^o Island during the morning of November 21. It halted briefly for reorganization near the tobacco factory, and while here the company was given information of General Kittel^o by a 5th Division medical aid man. The aid man, who had been held prisoner in the basement hospital of the tobacco factory and who had escaped by a subterfuge, declared that the general was in the operating room of the hospital and that he was lightly guarded. Accordingly, Company K rushed the factory and was able to gain control of most of the building without opposition. A small group of Germans attempted to hold out in the electrical generating plant. To have grenaded them out would have left the hospital without electricity, so no immediate attack was directed against them. Soon, however, they were talked and threatened into surrender, and the entire factory was in American hands.

General Kittel^o was captured on the operating table while under morphine. During the fighting for the Kaserne,^o he had been wounded in the left leg, and it was in a cast from the thigh down. The general was immediately placed under the most careful guard. A German nurse was permitted to attend him, although she was forbidden to speak to the patient and was searched on entering and leaving the room. In the evening, a platoon of Company I was moved to the hospital and assisted in the evacuation of General Kittel.^o The general was asked to surrender the remainder of the Metz garrison but refused. As a result, there was never a formal surrender of the city, although at so late a date as the capture of General Kittel^o it would

have been little more than the symbolic recognition of an accomplished fact.

On November 22, the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry cleaned up the last German resistance in Metz. Companies L and K completed the clearing of the southern part of Chambiere^o Island and shortly after noon crossed over to Saulcy Island^o (Ile Saulcy—Weiden Insel, in German). Meanwhile, elements of Company K, under the guidance of a Russian who had been a German prisoner at Metz for two years, worked through the tunnels of the city, using phosphorus grenades to flush out any remaining Germans. At 1435, the commanding officer of the 377th Infantry notified Division that the last resistance had ceased, and at 1438 Division informed the XX Corps that all German resistance in the city of Metz was at an end.

The story of the fall of Fortress Metz has been told in terms of the infantry regiments and battalions, and there is perhaps no other way to tell the story of a battle. The advance of the infantry to the objective is both the symbol and the essence of victory; the rest of the Division exists to make this advance possible. Nevertheless, it is equally a truism that the infantry is dependent on its supporting troops, and at the conclusion of the tactical account of the Metz operation the Division effort may be placed in better balance by a summary of the work of several Division units which have earlier been mentioned only in isolated instances.

The 320th Medical Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Max W. Carver, and the rest of the Division's medical personnel, their work coordinated by Lt. Col. Patrick J. Hand, Division Surgeon performed outstandingly throughout the operation. Like all supporting troops, the Medical battalion encountered great difficulties as a result of the extremely long battle line and of the simultaneous advance of several rapidly moving attacks, but these difficulties were successfully overcome. When the 95th Division moved into position before Metz, the medical battalion occupied the following locations. The 320th Clearing Station was set up in part of a large school building in Giraumont,^o the other wing of which was occupied by the 2nd platoon of the 30th Field Hospital. The three collecting companies attached to the three infantry regiments were located at Rombas^o (Company A with the 377th Infantry), at Homecourt^o (Company B with the 378th Infantry) and at Doncourt^o (Company C with the 379th Infantry).¹ Because of the long evacuation route from Rombas^o and Homecourt^o to Giraumont,^o a second clearing station was set up at Briey,^o where the 103rd Evacuation Hospital was also located. Final-

¹Before the attack jumped off, the station at Doncourt^o was moved to Mars-la-Tour, where more adequate facilities existed.



Above: An arrogant Nazi officer is flushed from his headquarters during the Metz mop-up.
 Below: War correspondents followed the Division throughout its European battles. He
 Lewis Hawkins of Associated Press interviews a Victory Division soldier in Metz.



Above: A downtown Metz intersection after the battle. The Hotel Royal, Hitler's residence when in Metz, is on the right.

Below: The Metz skyline is marked by its famed cathedrals.



Division troops drive through a crowded Metz street the day after the fall of the great fortress city.



Above: Infantrymen patrol a Metz street a few hours before the city's final capitulation.
 Below: A patrol moves cautiously through Metz streets, clearing German snipers.

ly, the medical sections of the infantry battalions had set up aid stations and forward aid stations as close to the front lines as was consistent with efficient operation.

When the 377th Infantry jumped off November 8 in its two initial operations, the limited objective attack on the Maizieres^o pocket and the Uckange^o river crossing, casualties were heavy, and Company A 320th Medical Battalion treated and transported 109 cases to the clearing station at Briey^o between midnight and 0730. However, there was no break in the evacuation chain, from the battalion forward aid station to the aid station to the ambulance haul and the collecting station, where the medical officers worked untiringly and without rest for a 48-hour stretch.

Particular problems were caused by the development of the crossing at Uckange^o (Operation Casanova). In the absence of a bridge, all casualties had to be taken across the swollen Moselle in assault boats. To meet the difficulties of the situation, the 1st Battalion medical section was split; the battalion surgeon and some of the men crossed east of the Moselle, while the rest remained at the aid station in Uckange^o (the engineer surgeon and the 377th Infantry's assistant regimental surgeon were also assigned to this station). Finally, during the period when the bridgehead force was completely isolated, medical necessities were included among the supplies dropped by artillery liaison plane. New problems for the medical battalion were presented by the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry establishment of a bridgehead across the Moselle at Thionville.^o Again it was necessary to evacuate the wounded across the Moselle by assault boat, and as the bridgehead was expanded to the south, the difficulties were increased since, until the bridge had been completed, only litters could be used for the haul of from three to four miles. To meet this situation, four litter squads from Collecting Company B were sent to the 2nd Battalion medical section as well as two squads from the XX Corps and two squads made up of members of the Division band. When the Thionville^o and the Uckange^o bridgehead forces were combined in Task Force Bacon, a special collecting post was set up at Thionville. Six ambulances were assigned to this post (five from Company B and one from Company C), and permission was obtained from Corps to use the 664th Clearing Station at Hettange-Grande.

When the Division jumped off in the main assault against Metz on November 14 and 15, the resources of the battalion were called on to bear a tremendous burden; on November 15 alone, 358 wounded were treated and evacuated. However, all demands were met, and during the next days the various installations were rapidly shifted forward as rapidly as the tactical situation made it possible. All

three of the collecting companies displaced toward Metz as their regiments advanced, and on November 17 in a coordinated move the 2nd platoon of the clearing company and the 30th Field Hospital platoon both moved to Rombas.^o On November 18, the medical support section of Task Force Bacon was almost overwhelmed by the numerous casualties resulting from the demolition of Fort Bellecroix;^o 109 cases were received and treated in a two-and-a-half-hour period. On the same day, a new method of evacuation, mentioned earlier in the text, was employed when casualties were evacuated from the 379th Infantry sector by artillery liaison plane. Beginning November 20, the burden of casualties became somewhat lighter, but at the end of the Metz campaign the 320th Medical Battalion and the battalion aid stations had treated and transported a total of 2,107 casualties.

Tribute must also be paid to the company aid men. It was they who worked most closely with the attacking infantry, who shared the dangers and who were accepted by the infantry as its own. A cursory inspection of the Silver Star and Bronze Star awards for heroism reveals their courage in the treatment and evacuation of wounded under fire. And it was they who suffered the greatest part of the casualties incurred by medical personnel (there were over 100 battle casualties among medical troops of the Division during November).

The work of the 320th Engineer Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. James I. Crowther, has already been noticed in connection with its river-crossing and bridge-building operations. However, the battalion was also engaged in multifarious other duties, and perhaps the clearest appreciation of its achievements can be gained from a detailed account of a single day's activities. November 18 may be taken as typical, and the story will be told by companies.

Company A was normally in support of the 377th Infantry and in the Metz campaign it had first been assigned to the Uckange bridge-head operation. On November 15, one platoon was attached to Task Force Bacon and remained with the task force until the fall of Metz. On November 17, the company was directed to move to Woippy,^o leaving only one platoon at Uckange.^o Consequently, on November 18 Company A had one platoon attached to Task Force Bacon, one platoon at Uckange and the remainder of the company at Woippy.^o

The platoon attached to Task Force Bacon was first engaged November 18 in preparing beehive demolition charges and in checking flame-throwers for the assault of Fort St. Julien.^o Later, elements of the platoon participated together with the infantry in the actual assault. Finally, the evening of November 18-19 the engineers

brought up assault boats for the planned crossing of the Seille the next morning. The platoon at Uckange^o had as its main mission the security and maintenance of the ponton bridge there. A squad was sent to Imeldange^o to search for reported booby traps; none were found but considerable stores of German weapons and ammunition were uncovered.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the company was supporting the 377th Infantry in its drive for the Moselle. During the night of November 17-18, engineers had participated in two patrols across the Moselle north of Metz. During the day, a path was blown through a minefield east of Maizieres^o with bangalore torpedoes. The advance of the infantry from Woippy^o to the river was given close support, and the engineers cleared a way through a minefield just north of the Hafen Canal.^o When the canal had been crossed, the Moselle bridges were immediately reconnoitered, but both in the area were damaged beyond repair. Plans were made for an assault boat crossing and Company A men with the assistance of two squads of Company B moved 30 boats south from Woippy.^o When the crossing was postponed until November 19, the boats were returned to their bivouac area. To assist the final Moselle crossing, construction of an improvised footbridge across the canal was begun to the south, and the partly demolished bridge over the canal to the north was repaired so that jeeps might use it.

Company B was normally in support of the 378th Regiment and during the period November 5-9 had served as infantry in the defense of the extended regimental front. On November 10, the company was relieved from attachment to the 378th Infantry and shortly afterwards moved to Budange,^o where it participated in the bridge-building attempts at Uckange.^o On November 16, the company was returned to direct support of the 378th Infantry and moved to Pierre-villers.^o

On November 18, the 1st platoon supported the operations of the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry and blew all locked doors in the recently captured Canrobert forts.^o The platoon also removed Schu-mines from a foot path leading from Semecourt^o to Fort de Feves^o and removed antitank mines from a road in the vicinity of Semecourt.^o Tree charges, including 50 bore charges and 25 pounds of TNT, were removed from trees on both sides of the road leading northwest from Saulny.^o The 3rd platoon of Company B supported the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry in its drive for the river. Engineers accompanied the infantrymen who were crossing when the bridge was blown, and immediately afterwards the engineers began planning and reconnaissance for an assault boat crossing. Meanwhile, the 2nd platoon

filled craters, cleared abatis and mines and removed demolition charges from trees along the main supply route into Longeville-les-Metz.^o

When the 95th Division took over the front before Metz, Company C of the 320th Engineer Battalion was at first in reserve at Joeuf;^o it was then committed in the bridging operations at Uckange,^o and finally, on November 16, it reverted to direct support of the 379th Infantry, its normal mission, and moved to Caulre Farm.^o During the next two days, it performed the usual engineer missions and in addition played an important part in the assault of fortifications.

On November 18, the 1st platoon was used as security around the command post of the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry. The 2nd platoon demolished enemy fortifications at the recently captured St. Hubert Farm^o and then moved on to support the 2nd Battalion in its attack on Moscow Farm.^o The 3rd platoon was also working with the 2nd Battalion. Two squads were used in the formation of engineer-infantry assault teams, and the third was in reserve. The assault team attacked a pillbox and three large casements northeast of Jeanne d'Arc.^o The infantry kept the embrasures closed while the engineers placed demolition charges on top of the fortifications. Before the explosives were set off the enemy surrendered. Day after day, the men of the 320th Engineer Battalion were engaged in operations similar to those just described and, in close cooperation with the infantry regiments, they made material contributions to the success of the drive on Metz.

The 95th Division Artillery¹ commanded by Brigadier General Mark McClure,^o was universally credited with outstanding achievements in the Metz operation. In a study of these achievements, it is not any single mission or any single unit which is revealed as most important, but rather the flexibility of all the artillery units and their ability to give strong and continuous support to several simultaneous offensive operations. At one and the same time, Division Artillery was supporting the drive of Task Force Bacon down the east bank of the Moselle, the attack of the 377th and 378th Infantry Regiments into Metz west of the Moselle and the attack of the 379th Infantry against the great southwestern fortifications. All these operations demanded intensive artillery preparations, close support fires and

¹Division Artillery consisted of three light battalions normally in support of the three infantry regiments (the 920th Field Artillery Battalion in support of the 377th Infantry, the 358th Field Artillery Battalion in support of the 378th Infantry, and the 359th Field Artillery Battalion in support of the 379th Infantry) and one medium battalion, the 360th Field Artillery Battalion, normally in general support of the Division effort. While the organization of the field artillery units in support of specific infantry regiments indicates the primary mission and responsibility of the battalion, the fires of all available units were frequently concentrated, through Division Artillery fire direction center, on important targets.

emergency missions to repel German counterattacks. Nevertheless, despite the handicap of long communication lines and widely scattered installations, effective fires were maintained throughout the campaign.

When the battle for Metz began with the limited objective attack on the Maizieres^o pocket and with the Moselle crossing at Uckange^o the Division Artillery grouped its forces as follows (including attached artillery units):

The Maizieres^o Operation: 358th Field Artillery Battalion, 282th Field Artillery Battalion, A Battery 360th Field Artillery Battalion, A Battery 204th Field Artillery Battalion, and captured weapons.

The Uckange^o Operation: 920th Field Artillery Battalion, B and C Batteries 360th Field Artillery Battalion, Company B 807th Tank Destroyer Battalion, two platoons 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and captured enemy weapons.

Beginning at 1500 November 8 an observer from the 920th Field Artillery Battalion registered three gun from separate positions in a simulated battalion registration in order to give the appearance of greater artillery strength. This was followed by the actual registration of the 920th Battalion. Heavy artillery preparations were fired before the attacks and close support was continued during the operations. Between 1200 November 8 and 1200 November 9, 3,543 rounds and 274 missions were fired.

When the Thionville^o bridgehead was established, a liaison officer from the 358th Field Artillery Battalion was sent to it in order that artillery support might be arranged with Corps artillery, since the area was out of range of the Division guns. Division pilots and observers also patrolled the Thionville^o front with liaison planes. A difficult problem in the coordination of fires was posed by the attack south from Thionville.^o The defensive fires for the 377th Infantry force isolated in Imeldange^o and Bertrange^o had to be so arranged as not to endanger the forces moving south to their relief, and since the artillery was unable to displace immediately to positions to the rear of the Thionville^o force, the infantry attacked almost directly in the face of their heaviest supporting weapons. To coordinate these supporting fires with the infantry advance was a delicate operation but one that was successfully accomplished.

At the time of the main attack against Metz beginning November 15, Division artillery employed the following organization:

The 377th Infantry and Task Force Bacon: 920th and 282nd Field Artillery Battalions.

The 378th Infantry: 358th Field Artillery Battalion.

The 379th Infantry: 359th and 204th Field Artillery Battalions.

The 360th Field Artillery Battalion was in general support in the zone of the 377th Infantry. During the 24-hour period following 1200 November 15, the 920th Field Artillery Battalion fired 20 missions and 454 rounds. With the aid of an air observer, fire was directed against enemy guns five miles southeast of Uckange^o and direct hits were secured on the ammunition supply of the guns. The 358th Field Artillery Battalion fired 122 missions expending 1,795 rounds. The 359th Field Artillery Battalion fired 24 missions expending 2,163 rounds, including 10 missions for the purpose of screening liaison planes dropping supplies to the isolated units of the 379th Infantry. The 360th Field Artillery Battalion, which was in general support of the Division attack, fired 57 missions expending 577 rounds. A Time on Target mission was fired against Saulny,^o and several concentrations were directed against an enemy strongpoint near St. Remy.^o Finally, during the night of November 15-16, the battalion maintained harassing fire on the Metz bridges.

As the attack moved forward, the various artillery units displaced rapidly so as to remain within range and so as to minimize inactive periods. The 920th Field Artillery Battalion, for example, moved east of the Moselle to Argancy on November 17 to continue the support of Task Force Bacon. While enroute, an emergency request was received for fire against two 88's located at a crossroads south of Malroy.^o Battery A pulled off the road, hurriedly spotted its position and laid the guns on approximate data. The initial salvo was "on the way" in three minutes. One of the four rounds scored a direct hit on the nearest enemy gun. A sensing of "100 short" was given and a few seconds later the second enemy gun was put out of action.

As the 95th and 5th Divisions closed in on Metz, the artillery targets were limited by the nearness of American troops. During the night of November 18, heavy harassing fires were placed on the narrow escape gap still open to the east of Metz. On November 19 this was closed, and by evening the Division Artillery fire was largely restricted to the forts still holding out in the 379th Infantry zone. On November 22, all artillery units began reconnaissance for new locations to support the drive to the Saar.

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In the Metz operation the 95th Division captured a city which had not fallen to assault for 1,500 years; it destroyed the German 462nd Division and the 73rd Regiment of the German 19th Division, inflicting on the enemy, at a conservative estimate, 10,000 casualties; and it captured 65 towns, 19 forts and a host of pillboxes and strongpoints. This is the myth and these are the statistics. But the pride of the Division in the Metz operation does not stand or fall with myth and

statistics. It is true that the strength of a city against medieval knights or even against the weapons of the nineteenth century has little relevance to its strength against the tactics of 1944, that German divisions were destroyed cheaply in the later stages of the campaign and that even during the Metz phase the tremendous Fort Lorraine was abandoned without a fight. In the minds of the men of the Division, the primary certainty is that of a difficult job well done, the knowledge that the G-3 periodic report for November 17 and the following days was stating the simple truth in military jargon when it rated the combat efficiency of the Division as superior. Because of this certainty and this knowledge, it is gratifying that the deed has its legendary expression, the end of the millennial inviolability of Metz, Maid of Lorraine, and that the figures and statistics are impressive.

There are, however, several characteristics of the battle for Metz which may be mentioned here, since a knowledge of the difficulties facing the Division and of the ways in which they were overcome can help to explain the Division's pride in the operation. With reference to the Germans, the main point to be made is that during the important actions of the campaign they were fighting with determination and stubbornness. The total of prisoners (over 6,000) in relation to other enemy casualties (estimated at 4,000) must be evaluated in the light of the fact that the greater part of the prisoners were taken in the city of Metz after final German defeat had become inevitable. In the crucial struggles for the approaches to the city, the Germans were being wounded and killed more than they were being captured. On the Division side, there was in the first place an accurate estimate of the German defensive attitude, bold stripping of portions of the American line during the attack and successful deception. For several days, for example, only the thinly stretched Task Force St. Jacques stood between the enemy forces and the command posts of the 378th Infantry and of Division. However, no attack was made against it, and at the end of the campaign the Germans in the forts apparently still believed the 95th Division in position to their front. In the second place, emphasis must be placed on the tremendous length of the Division battle line and the multiplicity of the Division operations. There was no reserve regiment, and with the formation of Task Force Bacon the Division was attacking with four regimental forces; within the regiments, once the attack had begun, there were no reserve battalions. And because of the long battle line, the various operations proceeded at times almost independently with the result that unusual leadership demands were made and met not only at the regimental but also at the battalion level. In the third place, it is a character-

istic of the Metz operation that at crucial points of the struggle the Division was fighting soldiers' battles. The Division was committed to its last capabilities and even at these crucial points it was impossible to muster any overwhelming superiority of materiel or numbers. At Fort de Feves,^o at the slag pile, and at Fort d'Illange,^o to mention three key points, the Germans had the advantages; if the opposing troops had been equal, the defenders would have won. The reason they lost is because they were outfought by the Division units on the spot, and the final explanation of the Division success at Metz is to be found in the courage and skill of its officers and men in a whole series of engagements.

On November 22 General Twaddle^o issued the following message to be read to all troops:

"On 8 November, at the beginning of our offensive against Metz, I told you: 'The road that leads through Metz is the road that will take us into Germany. On it we will earn the title you chose for yourselves—The Victory Division.'

"You were 'green' troops when you heard those words. Now, two weeks later, you are old soldiers. In the hell of fire along the Moselle and around the mighty forts of Metz you proved your courage, your resourcefulness, and your skill.

"Nothing I can say can add to the pride and satisfaction you must feel in your own hearts. Your magnificent performance in this, your first battle, has materially shortened the road that leads to Germany, and to Victory."

And in April, on the day its fighting came to an end, the 95th Division was commended for its part in the Metz operation by General Patton,^o praise from whom meant more than from anyone else outside the Division. Writing to General Twaddle,^o he declared:

"The achievement of your division and attached units, consisting of the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 778th Tank Battalion, and 547th AAA AW Battalion, in successfully completing the assigned mission in connection with the reduction and capture of the strongly fortified city of Metz by Third U. S. Army was outstanding, both in the combat skill of the individual units committed and the control and sound tactical judgment displayed by commanders of all echelons.

"The fourteen days of continuous attack against a strong and aggressive enemy, along a 26-mile front, drove irresistibly to the heart of the city of Metz where contact was made with American forces advancing from the south. In the course of this attack you successfully (1) made four assault crossings of the Moselle River at its high flood stage, (2) penetrated the line of defending forts, reducing those necessary to accomplish the mission, and (3) greatly contributed to

the destruction of an entire reinforced German division. Against these fortifications which had never before in modern times fallen by assault, in terrain favorable to the enemy, and under almost intolerable weather conditions of rain, flood, and bitter cold, your officers and men met a most searching combat test which required not only individual courage, skill, endurance, and determination, but also sound tactical judgment coupled with an insatiable desire to close with the enemy.

“This achievement has added lustre to the glorious history of American arms, for which you and all the officers and enlisted personnel of your division and attached units, are highly commended.”

THE GERMAN DEFENSE OF METZ

A complete history of the reduction of Fortress Metz would include an adequate account of German plans and operations. At present, the materials on which such an account might be based are not available, and it may be that they no longer exist. Nevertheless, certain general statements can be made, and there are isolated points on which there is more detailed information. The following sketch is no more than an attempt to bring out the most significant aspects of the German defense and to illustrate these by several captured German documents.

Just as the operations of the 95th Division at Metz were a part of the Third Army drive toward Darmstadt^o and Frankfurt,^o so the German defense at Metz must be viewed as a part of the enemy reaction to this Third Army attack. In the first place, the German high command decided to meet the Third Army drive with the tactical reserves of Army Group "G" and to avoid as long as possible the commitment of any strategic reserves. In the second place, the high command decided that on the Third Army front the attack of the XII Corps in the south was the more dangerous, since a break-through there would open the way to the Kaiserslautern Gap^o and to the Rhine. Consequently, the divisions which Army Group G had available were immediately sent to the XII Corps front, and it was only later that new divisions were committed in the XX Corps sector to the north. From the standpoint of the defense of Metz, these decisions meant that the German 19th and 462nd Divisions would continue to defend the sector from Thionville^o to Metz and that they could expect only miscellaneous fortress and replacement units as reinforcements.

Under these conditions, it was plain that the Germans would not be able to hold the line of the Moselle and Seille rivers and that plans must be made for a withdrawal. With respect to the Metz area, however, the Germans possessed two alternative plans, and it seems that before the high command had decided in favor of one or the other, the speed of the American attack had taken the decision out of their hands. In the first plan, Metz was a strong point in the Moselle

Seille line, but when that line was broken, Metz would be abandoned and its garrison would withdraw to new positions. In the second plan, the Metz garrison was to be strengthened and the Metz defenses were to be improved; if the Moselle-Seille line broke, the garrison would withdraw into the fortress area and continue the fight even after the city had been encircled. General Kittel,^o in command at Metz from November 10 until his capture November 21, declared that as late as November 12 the Germans had not decided whether to make Metz a major strongpoint; when he ordered defensive material including mines and anti-tank items, he was sent 20 carloads of barbed wire, which he immediately returned as useless. As a result of the indecision of the German high command in combination with the speed and aggressiveness of the American attack, the Germans suffered the disadvantages of both plans. The garrison was not withdrawn from Metz and it was almost completely destroyed; the garrison was not able to defend the fortress area, and American troops were soon pouring through Metz to drive onward to the Saar. The Germans neither rescued their troops nor achieved any important delay.

In considering the German defense somewhat more in detail, the two division zones may be treated separately. In the north, the German 19th Division was concerned only in part with the 95th Division and most of its front faced the 90th Division. In general, the 19th Division seems to have used its forces wisely but to have been forced back by superior strength. Against the 90th Division crossing at Koenigsmacher,^o a counterattack of regimental strength was directed and the expansion of the bridgehead momentarily halted. Against the 95th Division crossing at Uckange,^o a counterattack of approximately half a battalion was directed, and here again the expansion of the bridgehead temporarily stopped. When the 95th Division, followed by the 10th Armored Division, forced a crossing at Thionville^o also, the German 19th Division was unable to check the expansion of the bridgehead even though reinforcements were sent north from the German 462nd Division at Metz; when the 95th Division launched its main assault, it became clear that to send troops from Metz to Thionville^o was merely robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The 95th Division was, however, primarily concerned with the 462nd Division in Metz, to the south of the German 19th Division. Here the situation was one of confusion and disorganization and the defense remained largely uncoordinated. In part, this was a result of the high command's indecision noted above as to the tactics to be employed at Metz; in part, it had to do with questions of reorganiza-

tion and change of command. The 462nd Division had originally been merely an administrative and mobilization division for the Metz area. Later, during the month of October, it was upgraded to an infantry division, and on November 3 was upgraded further, on paper at least, to a Volksgrenadier division. Finally, it was planned to pull it out of the line and replace it with another division to be commanded by General Kittel. Only a few elements of this second division ever arrived at Metz, but General Kittel^o was put in command of the 462nd Division November 10 and its reorganization was in process at the time the American attack began. Under these conditions, a coordinated and aggressive defense was impossible, and the embryonic divisional organization soon broke down to a series of quasi-independent battle groups. These groups might offer a stubborn defense from prepared positions or in house-to-house fighting, but their counterattacks were little more than futile and costly attempts to retake positions just lost. The clearest evidence of the breakdown of coordinated control is to be found in the absence of attacks from the forts, where some 2,000 German troops had been bypassed, against the 95th Division flanks and supply lines. As the fighting continued and as the original units suffered heavy casualties, the Germans threw in numerous small units, poorly trained, poorly equipped, and with low morale, and the character of the opposition became even more disorganized and ineffective. In the city of Metz itself, some 100 units were identified. There were units formed from the elderly police of Metz; there were units of the Volksturm encountered in the 5th Division's section of Metz; and there were units of the unfit and the convalescent. When one group arrived at the Corps prisoner-of-war enclosure, an interrogator gave the command "Fall in!" No one moved until an officer prisoner of the same unit stepped forward and placed the men in proper position; the officer explained, "They did not hear you, sir; most of them are deaf."

By November 17, it was clear that German resistance west of the Moselle was collapsing and that only the forts could hold out. Accordingly, the night of November 17-18, the Germans withdrew some of their forces east of the Moselle, directed the remainder to take refuge in the western forts still holding out, and blew the Moselle bridges.

As a result, the German forces were split into two groups, those in Metz and those in the forts. The tactics which were to be employed in the city are well illustrated by an order issued by General Kittel^o on November 14.

1. I have taken over the defense of Fortress Metz as of noon, November 14, 1944.

2. The witnesses of a thousand-year-old borderland fight are watching the soldiers now engaged in the battle. It is my duty, as well as that of all officers, to hold Fortress Metz even at the risk of our lives. I expect all soldiers to prove their worthiness in the battle, in memory of their ancestors who fought on the battle fields of Metz in 1870 and in 1914.

3. The battle efficiency of the troops here is varied. The evils of meager training, unwise commitment, misdirected care and softness are left mostly by the reserves. Reserves are not here to neutralize breakthroughs resulting from carelessness, neglected reconnaissance and lack of liaison.

4. The counterthrust with reserves is too often used and wastes forces unnecessarily which might be better employed elsewhere. I demand, therefore, and this applies especially to unit commanders in the front line, greater alertness on the part of all outposts, constant visual reconnaissance, reconnaissance by small units in front of the main line of resistance and constant liaison with the units on both flanks. Every commander, from platoon leader upward, has to have a small reserve. A commander without reserve may be compared to an empty letter box, which is of no use. As soon as the last reserves have been committed, the commander loses his initiative.

5. The seriousness of the situation compels me to announce the following: Commanders and units losing men as prisoners or as deserters will be reported.

The families of deserters will suffer the consequences of desertion.

It is intolerable to receive reports from the artillery that groups of soldiers abandon their weapons without a fight in order to surrender to the enemy or to disappear altogether.

6. If I discover any soldiers loafing in Metz, I shall have them shot on the spot. Deserters and those who allow themselves to be captured must expect to be fired on as enemy by our own artillery.

7. It is forbidden for any unit or supply installation in Metz and its surroundings to issue anything to soldiers, no matter how long these soldiers have been away from their unit. Couriers, signal personnel, etc. will have written permits. So-called "self-supplying" will cease immediately. All soldiers in Metz will be attached to some unit within 24 hours.

8. The welfare of our fighting troops must be improved. It is the duty of commanders to see that soldiers have at least two warm

drinks a day and that handling of food and consumption of alcohol is supervised.

9. It is possible that enemy tanks or troops will break through the outskirts of the city. The troops are to be instructed about the following:

a. During the day, the machine guns and the bulk of the troops will occupy the second and third floors of corner buildings. The house entrance must be protected by two guards.

b. The corner house will be manned by no less than a squad.

c. At night, the troops will be on the ground floor.

d. To hang around street corners and then disappear at the first sign of enemy fire is forbidden. Every street must give the appearance of emptiness and ambush.

e. The opening of fire in streets is effective only if the enemy cannot find any cover.

f. Instead of extending in depth, the defense must be linear and should be echeloned in height up to the roofs on street corners and individual streets.

g. Panzer faust troops must be on the ground floor. Window open! Ambush!

h. Running about in the streets is forbidden. It is necessary when occupying a house, to establish a messenger and supply route not under enemy fire, through the courtyard and garden (by wall break-throughs, etc.).

i. Local fighting quickly exhausts the energy of troops. Therefore, everything must be done to stop the enemy outside the towns. Penetrating tanks have to be taken care of with Panzerfausts.

j. My battle experiences around and in large towns: Rumors take on gigantic proportions. All blabberers, rumor mongers, deliberate liars, commanders who invent false reports in order to shirk their duty, ghost seers, and the usual clowns have to be reprimanded for their stupidity by cold blooded people. For example, on November 14, 1944, the rumor circulated that enemy tanks would be in the city within 10 minutes. Rather than immediately arresting that type of rumor monger, people annoyed me with questions as to the truth of the report. Every commander must maintain the point of view: "Where I am there exist no rumors but only facts. What my own eyes have not seen is 99 per cent swindle."

/s/ Kittel

Generalleutnant

Distribution: Down to platoon leaders.

The previous military experience of General Kittel^o had gained him a reputation as primarily a town fighter. After continuous service from the time of the 1914-1918 World War, he was placed under the control of Army Group Nord at the beginning of the Russian campaign. At first, he served as city commandant in several of the larger Polish and Russian cities captured by the Germans (Krivoi Rog, Stalino, Lemberg, Krakow) and was active primarily as an administrator. Later, General Kittel^o became a specialist in tactical retreat and was known for his ability to withdraw from these cities with a delaying action even after they had been encircled. It was doubtless his hope to accomplish this in Metz also, but the story of the fall of the city has shown the frustration of his plans. General Kittel, during his interrogation, made several comments on American tactics, as he had observed them in the operations of the 95th and 5th divisions. He had been most impressed by the rapidity of American artillery fire and at the same time praised its accuracy. In contrast to the Russians, who regularly used the same strategy in prescribed situations, General Kittel declared that the American strategy was more diversified and subtle and that he had greater difficulty in determining the measures to be employed against it.

The order issued by General Kittel^o and reproduced above can illustrate the German plan for the defense of Metz. The German tactics in the bypassed forts west of the Moselle may be illustrated by the earlier of two letters written by Colonel von Stoessel,^o commander of Fort St. Quentin,^o to the German LXXXII Corps on December 2 and December 4 respectively. Both letters were entrusted to patrols for delivery, and in each case American troops captured the patrol. The contents of the two letters were substantially the same and only the first will be reproduced.

Fort St. Quentin
December 2, 1944

Von Stoessel
Colonel
to the

LXXXII (82) Corps

"On 17 November I received the order from the divisional commander (General Kittel)^o to move to Fort Mannstein (Fort St. Quentin),^o to gather there all troops I could reach and to defend the fort to the last cartridge and to the last piece of bread. When I arrived there at 1800, Lt. Col. Richter, commanding officer of the 1010 Regiment, was getting ready to move to Fort Kronprinz (Fort Driant).^o I remained with my staff of about 25 men, and with a detachment of

engineers, also about 25 men strong, I occupied the four gates of the fort. I had at my disposal the Fortress Engineer Battalion 55 and the 2nd Battalion of the 1010 Regiment, which arrived the morning of November 18, together with a small number of stragglers from other units. According to my order, one company of Fortress Engineer Battalion 55 was given to Colonel Vogel, the commanding officer of Fort Alvensleben (Fort Plappeville).^o Furthermore, I supplied Fort Alvensleben with food and ammunition. From November 18 on, we were encircled. The night before, the enemy was only one kilometer away from us, but he remained inactive. A few tanks stood for quite some time in front of the north gate between Forts Mannstein and Alvensleben.

"The garrison amounted to about 650 men. The supply of ammunition was scarce. Mines and wire were completely missing. Of heavy weapons there were and still are only two heavy infantry howitzers and two 80-millimeter mortars for which there is no ammunition. There was food for about 10 days, and an additional supply for eight days was carried by the troops. The main scarcity is in bread, potatoes, salt and coffee.

"Due to the lack of heavy weapons, we could do very little to fight the enemy. He keeps himself out of the range of small infantry weapons, and in this is favored by the terrain. We succeeded, on November 19, in putting out of action a bridge crossing of the Moselle¹ by our machine gun and destroying the personnel of a pneumatic boat. The pontoon bridge across the Moselle northeast of the city was taken under fire by our infantry howitzer. From our fort, we directed the fire of the fortress guns of Fort Jeanne d'Arc^o and Fort Driant^o on a few targets. This was a difficult task due to the incomplete supply of radio and radio equipment. In the course of time, all targets which showed up in a distance of 2,500 meters were attacked by machine gun and also by rifle fire, especially motor vehicles. Thereupon the enemy became very cautious. The pontoon bridge was even taken under fire at a distance of 3,500 meters.

"Every day patrols were sent out to the surrounding villages. At the present, we try to supply Fort Alvensleben with food and to get in personal contact with Fort Jeanne d'Arc.^o But it seems that the enemy has our radio code, because all attempts have failed so far.²

. (A paragraph is here omitted which deals exclusively with events that took place after the 95th Division had been relieved in the Metz area)

¹The Colonel exaggerates.

²In the letter of December 4, von Stoessel^o reports that at first there was radio contact with division, corps, and army. On November 23, division did not answer, and after November 25 contact was broken with corps and army.

"The morale of the troops is good. Due to the mentioned lack of so many important things, however, the value of the encircled troops cannot be shown. I myself intend to send out two patrols with the order to get through to their own troops. I am giving this report to these patrols, also a list of identifications of all soldiers on Fort Mannstein, with the request to inform their relatives accordingly.

To Greater Germany and the Fuehrer

Sieg Heil!

v. Stoessel⁰⁰

Colonel von Stoessel⁰ surrendered Fort St. Quentin⁰ to the 5th Division December 6 because of lack of food. Since all of the Metz forts had surrendered within the next few days and since in no case was it necessary for American troops to assault them directly, it would appear that the German plan for the forts had failed equally with the plan for Metz. It might be noted, however, that according to a XX Corps interrogation report, while the enlisted men of Fort St. Quentin⁰ seemed well contented to be in captivity, the German officers soon fully recovered their arrogance. In fact, Colonel von Stoessel⁰ himself asked that his baggage be brought "to his room".

THE DRIVE TO THE SAAR

In the XX Corps plan, Metz was an obstacle on the way to the Saar, the Rhine and Frankfurt;^o it was in no sense a stopping point. While the 95th Division was reducing the last pockets of resistance in Metz, Corps completed its plans for the continuation of the attack. On November 21, General Twaddle,^o requested, in view of the heavy losses in men and materiel, that four days be set aside for rehabilitation and reorganization after the mopping up operations in Metz had been completed. Later the same day, however, the commanding general of the XX Corps directed that the 95th Division was to be relieved of all combat missions in the Metz area by the 5th Division, that it was to move into the zone then occupied by the 5th Division and effect relief without delay, and that orders for the continuation of the attack to the northeast would be issued shortly.

The relief of the 95th Division in Metz was begun November 22, and the three regiments prepared to move to their assembly areas east of the city. The 377th Infantry had been relieved by 0800 November 23, and at 1200 moved to a new area in the vicinity of Colligny,^o about seven miles east of Metz. The 378th Infantry began its move November 22 and before midnight had closed into the vicinity of Sorbey,^o about 10 miles southeast of Metz. The 379th Infantry was relieved by the 5th Division November 23, but because of traffic difficulties in Metz it was not until noon of November 24 that the regiment closed into its new assembly area in the vicinity of Peltre,^o about four miles southeast of Metz. The 377th and the 378th Infantry Regiments made their moves by marching, and in most cases it was only a day late and under hurried conditions that the men had the Thanksgiving dinners which they had hoped to have while resting in Metz.

As the Corps plan for the reduction of Fortress Metz had been modified in the course of the operation by the different rates of progress of the attacking divisions, so the Corps plan for the drive to the Saar was altered in view of the position of its divisions at the fall of Metz. The original plan had been to keep the main weight of Corps well to the north of Metz, driving to the Saar at Saarburg^o

and Merzig.^o However, on November 22 the 90th Division was in position northeast of Metz, facing generally south, and the 95th Division was moving into position along the French Nied, facing generally to the northeast. Meanwhile, in the north, the 10th Armored Division, which on November 19 had been directed by Corps to drive for the Saar at Saarburg^o and Merzig,^o was meeting bitter opposition along a prepared line of defense.

Accordingly, the XX Corps decided to send its infantry divisions northeast along the most direct route from Metz to the Saar. The 95th Division was directed by XX Corps Field Order No. 13, November 22, to be prepared to drive to the northeast, making the main effort on the left flank, and to seize crossings over the Saar between Saarlautern and Pachten,^o about four miles north of Saarlautern. In addition the 95th Division was to establish a bridgehead and to expand it northwards to Rehlingen^o to facilitate bridging operations of the 90th Infantry Division. The 90th Division would also drive from Metz northeast to the Saar, moving on the left of the 95th Division. It would assist the crossing of the Saar by the 95th Division with maximum fire support and, on Corps order, would bridge the Saar within the bridgehead established by the 95th Division. The 10th Armored Division, in accord with the original Corps plan would attack on the left of the 90th Division and drive to seize crossings over the Saar in the vicinity of Saarburg^o and Merzig.^o The 5th Infantry Division remained initially in Corps reserve. The XX Corps attack would be supported by the XIX Tactical Air Command, which would coordinate planned medium bomber support with the 9th Air Force. To the north of the XX Corps, the VIII Corps of the First U. S. Army would remain in position, and to the south, the XII Corps of the Third U. S. Army would, like XX Corps, continue its attack to the northeast.

The enemy situation at the fall of Metz was very obscure in detail, but the general strategy seemed clear. Once the Germans had realized that the XX Corps attack on Metz would result in the successful encirclement of the city, they withdrew their mobile forces to the east. It was thought probable that in line with the German policy of economy of forces the majority of these units would continue their retreat to the Saar and that there would be no determined stand west of the river. However, Corps estimated that there were still approximately 25,000 troops in the Corps zone between the Moselle and the Saar, and with these it would be possible to conduct strong delaying actions.

These delaying actions would be conducted on terrain generally favorable to the Germans. There were two small rivers to the Divi-

sion front, the French Nied and the German Nied,^o both flowing in a generally northern direction and joining near the Division north boundary. Beyond the Nied rivers, there are rolling hills which rise gradually to a high plateau; the plateau then drops abruptly to the Saar basin. The land is cut by many small streams which form steep slopes and escarpments, and while most of the country is open and cultivated, there are extensive areas of thick woods, particularly on the right of the Corps zone. In addition, the road net was often poor, and the American advance could be made difficult by a systematic blowing of bridges and culverts. Finally, midway between the Moselle and the Saar the French had situated their Maginot line along a commanding ridge. While its forts faced to the east and toward Germany, it was nevertheless not without value in a delaying action against an advance from the west.

The afternoon of November 22, Corps directed that the Division make contact with the enemy as soon as possible and that it also make contact with the 80th Division, on its right, every four hours. Both missions were assigned to the 95th Reconnaissance Troop, to which Company D of the 778th Tank Battalion was attached. Beginning November 23, not later than 1300, the troop was to reconnoiter in front of the Division to the east. It was to maintain contact with the enemy and to investigate the condition of bridges and of suitable crossing places over the German Nied.^o The mission was successfully carried out and in the Division's south zone a bridge across the German Nied^o at Bionville^o was seized intact on November 23. The prepared demolitions which threatened the bridge were removed, and the reconnaissance troop maintained its position for 36 hours, despite interdictory heavy artillery fire, before Division infantry elements reached them. On November 24, the 1st platoon of the reconnaissance troop succeeded in seizing another bridge across the Nied, in this case west of Boulay,^o and sent patrols as far as Boulay^o itself despite numerous roadblocks. These patrols were not relieved by the advancing infantry battalions until the night of November 25.

On November 24, Corps directed that the attack be launched at 0730 November 25. Accordingly, as the main body of the Division was moving into its new assembly areas, Division Field Order No. 3 was issued on November 24 which detailed the part the 95th Division would play in the continuation of the Corps offensive. The general mission as defined by Corps has already been noted: The Division would drive northeast to the Saar, seize crossings, and expand a bridgehead to the north to facilitate bridging operations of the 90th

Division.¹ On the left, the 377th Infantry would attack with two infantry battalions abreast across the Nied River^o and seize the initial objective, the Ottonville Woods (Bois d'Ottonville),^o and would be prepared to continue the attack on Division order. The 378th Infantry was given the same mission on the right, and its initial objective was the high ground beyond Momerstroff.^o To each of the attacking regiments was attached a company of tanks, a company of the chemical mortars and a company of the 320th Medical Battalion.

The 379th Infantry (minus the reinforced 2nd Battalion) would be initially in Division reserve. It would conduct reconnaissance and be prepared to attack on Division order in any portion of the Division zone, with priority given to an attack to the northeast through elements of the 377th Infantry. The reinforced 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry was to take over a sector previously held by the 90th Division but which had now been given to the 95th Division in a modification of the Corps order of November 22. The relief of elements of the 90th Division in this zone was to be completed November 24, and it was effected by 1800 of that date. The mission assigned to the 2nd Battalion was to occupy and to hold the west bank of the Nied (at this point the French Nied and the German Nied^o have united) in zone and to support with maximum available fire the attack of the 377th Infantry to its initial objective and to its second objective.

Division Artillery was given the usual mission of supporting with fire the Division attack and was ordered to place the mass of fires in support of the 377th Infantry (it will be remembered that Corps had directed the Division to make its main effort on the left flank). The 320th Engineer Battalion was to provide normal engineer support with priority given to the mission of providing river crossing equipment to the attacking infantry regiments. Finally, the 95th Reconnaissance Troop, with Company D 778th Tank Battalion attached, was to reconnoiter the north and south flanks of the Division and to maintain contact with adjacent units.

The 95th Division drive from Metz to the Saar and across it into the Siegfried Line was a continuous operation by the Division as a whole, and it will be described by a day-to-day account of the Division advance. The Division moved forward with two regiments abreast in the attack, and it was only in the final seizure of the Saarlautern

¹Attached were the 778th Tank Battalion (less Company A), the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 547th A.A.A. Battalion and Companies A, B and D of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion. In artillery support, besides elements of Corps Artillery, the Division would have the 5th Division Artillery and the 4th Tank Destroyer Group, while the 112th A.A.A. Group was to be prepared, on Corps order, to furnish direct fire on the Siegfried Line with elements of the 119th A.A.A. Battalion. For the crossing operation of the Saar, the 1103rd Engineer Group would be in direct support and would construct two heavy bridges over the Saar in the vicinity of Saarlautern and Ensdorf.

bridge that the carefully hoarded reserve regiment, the 379th Infantry, was employed. In the beginning, progress was rapid against light opposition, and the speed of the advance was determined more by difficulties of weather, terrain and the ruined road-net than by enemy action. German resistance stiffened somewhat as the Division reached the Maginot Line.^o At this point the Division was also compelled to face new problems arising from an exposed right flank, and the problem of this open flank dominated Division tactics for the next days. The XX Corps on the left and XII Corps on the right had begun their attacks with parallel northeast axes of advance, but the XII Corps presently swung to the east. As a result, a wedge remained open between the 95th Division, continuing northeast, and the 80th Division, now moving east. Originally, XX Corps had planned to use the 5th Division to clean out this area, which contained the extensive forests of Karlsbrunn,^o St. Avold^o and La Houve^o (Foret Dominiale de la Houve). But on November 26 the 95th Division was informed that it must assume responsibility for this area, with the result that its front was immediately made five miles longer and would be almost doubled by the time it reached the Saar. Eventually, Corps gave the mission of clearing this area to a task force of more than regimental strength, but for several days the advance of the 95th Division was made precarious by counterattacks from the right flank. Meanwhile, resistance to the front gradually increased, and when the Division reached the point at which the plateau falls off to the Saar plain it became stubborn and aggressive. On November 29 it reached a climax with ten separate counterattacks directed against various points on the Division front. Finally the opposition was forced back, and the fight for the approaches to the Saar and for Saarlautern began. While the Division was still advancing through Saarlautern in slow house-to-house fighting, the bridge across the Saar was seized intact by a brilliantly executed maneuver during the night of December 2-3 in which the 1st Battalion 379th Infantry crossed the river and captured the bridge from the east end in a surprise attack. The Division had its bridgehead, and neither stubborn counterattacks nor violent artillery concentrations were able to dislodge it.

The drive to the Saar was begun at 0730 November 25 when the 377th and 378th Infantry Regiments jumped off in the attack from the German Nied.^o In general, resistance was light, and before evening the attacking elements had reached the vicinity of the Maginot Line.^o On the left the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry, supported by the fire of 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry, crossed the Nied^o and cleaned up the town on its right bank. At 0950 they occupied Volmerange^o and

shortly afterwards were in Brecklange.^o North of Brecklange^o a branch of the Nied^o (the Kaltbach Brook^o) had flooded the route and caused some delay. However, by 1130 the foot troops had taken Roupeldange,^o and the battalion vehicles were making their way, though with great difficulty, through the flooded land. By mid-afternoon the battalion was ready to move across 800 yards of open ground and into the north part of the Ottonville Woods,^o the regimental objective. The attack moved out in a line of skirmishers with Company B on the left and Company A on the right. The main opposition came from artillery and mortar barrages, and by 1600 the woods in the battalion zone had been cleared. Ahead was the town of Ottonville^o and the fortifications of the Maginot Line.

To the south and right of the 1st Battalion, the 2nd Battalion jumped off from positions to the east of the German Nied^o which it had occupied the preceding day. The first objective was Boulay,^o and at 0830 the battalion moved out from a line of departure about a mile from the town, with Company E on the right, Company G on the left and with Company F behind Company E. Despite the apparent defensive strength of Boulay, the town was left almost undefended by the Germans. Two enemy were killed and two captured, and the battalion had complete control by 0930.

After reorganizing, the battalion moved out in the same formation at 1100 toward its section of the Ottonville Woods. On the right, Company E came under heavy fire from artillery, mortar and machine guns both from the front and from the exposed right flank. The advance platoon succeeded in reaching the woods, but the rest of the company was held up. The Germans continued to direct observed fire on the exposed troops and also sent patrols to surround them. Finally, at 1600, it was necessary to pull back the main body of the company under cover of smoke, although the advance platoon remained in the woods and was out of contact until the next morning, when the 3rd Battalion fought its way through to them.

To the left of Company E, Company G found its path blocked by a large pillbox several hundred yards south of the Ottonville Woods^o and commanding the approaches to them. Tank Destroyers were brought up to be used against it, and their direct fire proved effective. Company G occupied the fort, finding six German dead inside, and pushed on to the edge of the woods by 1330. In the afternoon, contact was made with Company B of the 1st Battalion on the left, and two platoons of Company F in reserve closed the gap between Companies E and G. The battalion held its position through the night and the next day until 1800 when it became regimental reserve after the 3rd Battalion had passed through it in the attack.

To the right of the 377th Infantry, the 378th Infantry jumped off at 0730 November 25 with the 2nd Battalion on the left and the 1st Battalion on the right. The 2nd Battalion had moved on November 24 to the vicinity of the German Nied° and had taken over the bridge at Bionville° which the 95th Reconnaissance Troop had seized and held. The night of November 24-25, the battalion occupied the towns of Bionville°, Morlange° and Bannay°, all on the east bank of the Nied°. At 0730 the Battalion moved out in a column of companies and with no opposition, except sporadic long-range artillery fire, reached Halling° by 1000. As the battalion advanced toward Momerstroff°, the leading company came under mortar fire; it continued its advance rapidly and cleared the town, taking 12 prisoners. The company following bypassed Momerstroff° and after a short skirmish had seized the high ground north of the town by 1330. In this position the battalion reorganized for defense and awaited orders for a continuation of the attack. A prisoner of war reported that a bridge across the Muehlenbach° River at Denting° had not yet been blown, and during the night a platoon from Company F moved through enemy-held territory to seize the bridge. Numerous attempts were made by the Germans to retake and to destroy the bridge during the night, and the next morning the Company F platoon was attacked by a force of 50 enemy. All these counterattacks were beaten off, and the platoon maintained its position until the main body of Company F fought its way to them.

The 1st Battalion 378th Infantry, on the Division right flank, also jumped off at 0730 November 25. Resistance was negligible in the beginning, and by 1015 Narbefontaine° had been occupied against only very light small arms resistance. After reorganizing, the battalion moved on down the road to Niedervisse°, the next objective, with Company A deployed on the left of the road and Company C on the right. As they approached the crossroads between Narbefontaine° and Niedervisse°, the battalion suddenly received heavy fire, small arms, mortar and 20-millimeter, from a fortified strongpoint on Hill 385 (the Johannisberg°) to the left. The battalion was caught by surprise and numerous casualties were suffered, including the battalion commander, Maj. Paul Hudgins°. Capt. E. L. Schoonover°, the executive officer, took command and by moving Company C around to the left succeeded in opening up a way into Niedervisse°, by dusk the battalion had occupied the town.

By the evening of November 25, the drive to the Saar was well under way and making rapid progress. The Germans had made some use of the few Maginot forts the Division had encountered, but the indications were that the enemy planned no more than a

delaying action there. However, communications and supply from the rear were proving difficult because of the poor road-net; the Germans had blown all bridges and culverts, and repair and maintenance was complicated by the flooded condition of much of the country. As a result, there was considerable traffic congestion in the rear areas. During the afternoon of November 25, it proved necessary to cancel plans for moving forward the tanks of Companies B and C of the 778th Tank Battalion, and the attacking regiments were ordered to plan to jump off the next day without tanks. At the same time, Division was forced to hold back certain elements of the 4th Tank Destroyer Group for the same reasons. However, engineers continued their work on the roads and bridges and toward evening the situation was improving. At 1545 the treadway bridge at Conde-Northen° had been repaired, and at 2200 a class 40 Bailey Bridge had been completed at Boulay.°

Meanwhile, satisfactory progress was being made by the units to the right and left of the Division. The 80th Division reported they had attacked the Maginot forts in their zone and had captured all the larger ones. Directly south of the 95th Division line, the 80th Division had taken the town of Bambiderstroff° and the right flank of the Division was secure, contact having been made by the reconnaissance troop with the 42nd Cavalry at Haute Vigneulle.° To the north the 90th Division had quickly taken its first objective the morning of November 25 and by evening had drawn ahead of the 95th Division. Contact with the 90th Division was being maintained by elements of the 95th Reconnaissance Troop at Anzeling.°

Accordingly, plans were made to continue the attack the morning of November 26. The 377th and 378th Infantry Regiments were again the attacking units, and the 379th Infantry, in Division reserve except for the 2nd Battalion, made plans to move to another assembly area nearer the front.

On the Division left flank, the 377th Infantry had planned to send the 1st Battalion on the left and the 3rd Battalion on the right in a coordinated attack on Ottonville.° However, the flooded area east of Eblange° made execution of the plan impossible, and the regiment eventually advanced in a formation more closely resembling a column of battalions.

The 1st Battalion moved Company C and the forward command group out of Roupeldange° to join Companies A and B which were still in the Ottonville° Woods. Companies A and B attempted to cross the Ottonville Brook° in accord with the original plan, but this proved impossible and the two companies were ordered to proceed to the northeast edge of the Ottonville Woods and launch an attack



First set up by the Victory Division, this type sign later appeared many times in Europe and the Pacific. This sign was located in France just west of the German border on the road to Saarlautern.

from there. While the shift in position was being effected with all the difficulties that such a change in plans involves, Company A was further disorganized by heavy enemy shelling and, in the confusion, some of its men moved back into Boulay.^o However, the company eventually collected its scattered forces and in the late afternoon launched an attack on Ottonville^o in coordination with Company B. Both companies moved through heavy machine gun fire into the town and by night had cleared it. Company C and the battalion command post moved to the northeast edge of Ottonville Woods^o and held up there for the night, moving down into Ottonville^o early next morning.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry passed through the 2nd Battalion and launched an attack at 0730 from the northeast edge of the Ottonville^o Woods with the town of Teterchen,^o four miles ahead, as its objective. The country over which they would pass was rolling and generally open with the Germans in control of excellent observation positions to the front. The advance was made in extended line of skirmishers with Company I on the left of the road and company L on the right, and with Company K following in reserve. Company I took the small town of Ricrange,^o just south of Ottonville,^o and the battalion headed for Teterchen,^o bypassing Ottonville^o on the left, which the 1st Battalion was to take, and on the right bypassing Denting,^o which was being attacked by the 378th Infantry. Once the 3rd Battalion left the woods it came under mortar fire and contended with this the whole day. About 1600 the battalion neared Teterchen^o and prepared for the final attack. Company I dug in positions on the reverse slope of a hill facing the town and protected the battalion's left flank. Company L then moved against the town with marching fire, and the Germans were forced to withdraw. Later that evening, the remainder of the battalion also moved into Teterchen. At dusk, Company K probed north of the town and made an attempt to take Velving,^o but resistance was heavy and it was decided to withdraw the company and resume the attack in the morning.

The 378th Infantry also attacked at 0730 November 26. The 2nd Battalion was on the left, the 1st Battalion on the right and the 3rd Battalion in reserve behind the 1st Battalion. The 2nd Battalion plan called for Company F, on the left, to advance to Denting^o and establish contact with the platoon which had seized the bridge there the night before and which had been heavily engaged ever since in beating off German attempts to recapture and destroy the bridge. Company E, after an artillery preparation, would move out north of

Momerstroff^o and seize the woods of the Johannisberg.^o Company G would be initially in reserve behind Company E.

Company F made its way toward Denting^o and drove into the town, capturing 30 prisoners. However, resistance continued throughout the day, and it was only in the late afternoon that the main body of the company was able to join with the platoon which had been guarding the bridge. Meanwhile, Company E met stubborn resistance in its attack on the woods, but within three hours the enemy had been forced out and withdrew to new positions near St. Henri^o Farm. While making this withdrawal the enemy came under the fire of Company G and suffered a high percentage of casualties. Company E reorganized in the woods, and at 1330 it continued the attack by moving against St. Henri Farm.^o The attack was successful and 20 Germans were captured and 16 killed. Here the battalion organized its position and held up for the day, although patrols from Company G were sent out to test the German defenses in the Maginot Line.^o The patrols captured three prisoners and seized two pillboxes without suffering any casualties.

In the woods on the Johannisberg,^o a Russian prisoner-of-war hospital was captured and guards were placed on it. On November 27, the Division G-5, Maj. Thomas V. Holland,^o and the Division surgeon, Lt. Col. Patrick J. Hand,^o made an inspection of the hospital. There were approximately 1,300 soldiers in the hospital as patients, and almost all were Russians (there were also 37 Poles, 14 Serbians and 3 Italians). To provide medical care, there were three Polish and two Russian doctors. It was estimated that the food supply available would last one week and the medical supplies for three days. On the morning of November 25, the hospital had been hit by artillery or air, and eight casualties had been suffered in one of the buildings. Consequently, the patients were in a highly nervous state, and it was necessary to maintain a large guard on the building to prevent the patients from escaping to the rear.

The 1st Battalion 378th Infantry launched its attack on the right flank of the 95th Division with the hill called the Zollstock^o as its objective. Company A was to seize the objective, while Company C would move around to the right, taking the village of Guerting^o and protecting the right flank of the regiment and the Division. Company B was in reserve, echeloned to the left rear of Company A. No opposition was met on the ground, and by late afternoon Company A had secured the objective. Company C was hit hard by mortar tree bursts, coming from the vicinity of Coume,^o as they were passing through the Coume^o woods. Nevertheless, the company continued its advance and by evening held positions along the road

northwest of Guerting,^o and Company B had moved into place on its left. Finally, a platoon of tank destroyers was sent up from Nieder-visse^o and overran the mortar positions at Coume^o which had been firing on Company C.

The 3rd Battalion, in regimental reserve, moved up behind the attacking battalions and was kept to the right to be available for use on the exposed flank of the Division. The night of November 26-27, it was disposed in the vicinity of Niedervisse.^o

By the evening of November 26, the 95th Division had driven through the Maginot Line,^o and despite stubborn resistance at certain strongpoints the Germans continued to withdraw and fought only delaying actions. In the afternoon, however, the problems facing the Division were materially increased when Corps ordered a boundary change. The 5th Division would not take over the wedge-shaped area opening up between the 95th Division and the 80th Division,



Members of the 320th Engineer Battalion prepare a roadblock to harass any possible German counterattack out of the Saarlautern bridgehead. This work was accomplished after the Division had made its maximum gain in the Saar region.

and the 95th Division must assume responsibility for this area and maintain contact with the XII Corps (80th Division). After discussing the question with General Twaddle,^o the corps commander agreed to attach to the 95th Division one motorized battalion from the 5th Division. This battalion was to relieve elements of the 80th Division at Longeville-St. Avold,^o and its primary purpose was to protect the commanding ground in Kerfent Woods,^o northwest of Longeville.^o Without specific permission of Corps, it might be used for no other mission, and it could not, for example, be employed in patrolling the new area taken over by the 95th Division. The 5th Division Artillery (less one battalion) was placed in support of the 95th Division.

The evening of November 26, General Twaddle^o ordered certain units of the 95th Division to assist the 5th Division battalion (the 3rd Battalion of the 10th Infantry) in relieving elements of the 80th Division; these units were the 95th Reconnaissance Troop (less one platoon), Company C 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company D 778th Tank Battalion. In addition, he directed the 5th Division Artillery (less one light battalion) to prepare to give artillery support in the new sector. Later in the evening, the 80th Division informed the 95th Division that five counterattacks had been received in the Longeville area. At 1700 November 26, the strongest of them, with a force estimated at battalion strength, had been directed against it in the vicinity of the Longeville Forest.^o A curtain of mortar fire was placed behind American lines, and the enemy charged using a large number of machine guns and hand grenades. Time on target concentrations broke up the attack and no prisoners were taken. The 80th Division stated that the relief would not be effected until its units (the 2nd Battalion 318th Infantry) had finished cleaning out the woods in this area. Plans were accordingly made to begin the relief November 27, and the 95th Division prepared to deal with a potentially dangerous flank situation.

The morning of November 27, the 95th Division continued the attack with the same regiments it had used November 25 and 26, the 377th on the left and the 378th on the right. In the 377th zone, the main assignments were given to the 2nd and 3rd battalions. The 1st Battalion sent its Company C against Valmunster,^o and the town was occupied by 0945 without opposition. The 1st Battalion then reverted to regimental reserve. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion prepared for an attack in the left of the regimental sector. It moved from Boulay,^o where it had been stationed in regimental reserve and at Teterchen^o picked up the tank destroyers which were used to mount the troops during the day's rapid advance. Swinging west from Teterchen,^o the 2nd Battalion

passed through Velving,^o just taken by the 3rd Battalion, and through Valmunster,^o just taken by the 1st Battalion; it continued into new territory and occupied Bettange,^o on the Nied,^o without opposition. Throughout the remainder of the day, the battalion, spearheaded by Company F, drove northeast up the right bank of the Nied.^o At Holling,^o Company F dismounted and attacked on foot but no resistance was encountered. However, the battalion commander, Capt. W. G. Neel,^o was severely wounded when he hit a decapitating wire while riding one of the tank destroyers; the command of the battalion was taken over by Major Albion C. Mulcock,^o previously executive officer of the 3rd Battalion. The move north continued through Remelfang^o and Vaudreching^o and then sharply east to Alzing.^o By later afternoon, the 2nd Battalion was prepared to take up positions to contain Bouzonville,^o where there was every reason to expect a determined defense. However, it was soon apparent that the town was not being held by the enemy and that the Americans would, for almost the last time, be welcomed as liberators. Accordingly, the battalion entered Bouzonville^o and outposted it for defense with detachments in the two villages to the front, Aideling^o and Benting.^o During the night, patrols were sent to probe the enemy defenses ahead, and one of these occupied Heining,^o less than a mile from the German border.

To the right of the 2nd Battalion, the 3rd Battalion also made rapid progress and by evening was looking across the German border. Company K began the advance with an attack on Velving,^o in the left portion of the battalion sector. By 0805 the town had been occupied, and the troops had been fired on only once, by an SS man in civilian clothes. It appeared that the Germans were effecting a general withdrawal, and Company K took advantage of it by initiating rapid pursuit. By evening the company had occupied Brettnach,^o Odenhoven,^o Chateau-Rouge^o and Voelfling.^o Only at Voelfling,^o a little more than a mile from the German border, did the Germans offer resistance.

In the right portion of the 3rd Battalion zone Companies I and L moved out of Teterchen^o in column in the early afternoon and took Tromborn^o without opposition. Later they advanced toward Villing,^o where the enemy resisted more stubbornly than at any other point in the regimental zone. Mortars and 88's in the town placed fire on the 3rd Battalion troops, but the battalion, with the aid of a platoon of tanks from the 778th Tank Battalion, was in control of Villing^o by 1600.

During the day the 1st Battalion, which had become regimental reserve, moved forward behind the attacking battalions, and the night

of November 27-28, two companies were in Brettnach^o and three in Tromborn.^o

Meanwhile, the 378th Infantry had jumped off in the attack at 0730. In the left of the regimental sector the 2nd Battalion, now supported by a company of medium tanks, left Company G, together with a section of 90-millimeter tank destroyers, to reduce a strong point still holding out in Denting.^o The mission was accomplished by 1000, and Company G joined the remainder of the battalion. Meanwhile, the main body of the battalion jumped off at 0730 against Coume.^o The town was quickly reduced, and 16 prisoners taken. The battalion then moved toward Dalem.^o Neither here, nor in the town of Hargarten,^o explored by a patrol, was any resistance met. From Dalem^o the advance was continued to the northeast, and in the absence of any road-net it was necessary to move even the vehicles across open country. Near St. Jean's Farm^o a wide ploughed field had to be crossed, and soon more than half the tanks and many of the other vehicles were bogged down. Nevertheless, the battalion continued toward Remering.^o As Company F, in the lead, worked its way over the ridge south of Remering,^o it was subjected to a terrific barrage of long-range artillery and of direct fire 88's and heavy mortars located on the commanding ground to the east. Company F continued into Remering^o and set up a defensive position, while the rest of the battalion sought shelter in a defilade position behind the ridge. At dusk, the whole battalion closed into Remering;^o the town was outposted with particular attention given to the battalion right flank, now exposed by the rapid advance of the day.

The 1st Battalion, 378th Infantry, met no resistance in its advance on November 27 except for occasional snipers. Company C moved up from Guerting^o to the high wooded hill (the Grande Saule^o) south-east of Falck.^o This hill was the key terrain feature of the whole area and the Germans later forced the 378th Infantry twice to take it by assault, but on November 27 the 1st Battalion found it bare of enemy. From the Grande Saule,^o Company C moved into lower Falck,^o and Company B passed through them into the main town of Falck.^o Finally, Company A moved into position on the Grande Saule. Between the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry and the old Division boundary, regimental patrols made reconnaissance missions, and it was found that Varsberg^o and Ham-sous-Varsberg^o were clear of enemy but that the Germans were digging in at Diesen.^o

The morning of November 27 the 80th Infantry Division launched an attack of battalion strength through Bouchepron,^o in the 95th Division zone, against objectives in the Bois des Bouleaux,^o and it was reported that the Germans withdrew. By 1200 the 3rd Battalion



10th Infantry Regiment 5th Division had occupied positions on the eastern edge of the Kerfent Woods. (At 1800, Corps ordered that the control of the 5th Division Artillery revert to the 5th Division and at the same time directed the 5th Division to continue to support the 3rd Battalion 10th Infantry in the Kerfent Woods with at least two light artillery battalions.) During the day, the 95th Reconnaissance Troop maintained contact on the right with elements of the 2nd Cavalry Group. The 80th Division was making rapid progress to the east and took St. Avold^o without opposition, but the extensive forests to the right of the 95th Division had not been cleared and reconnaissance reports indicated that considerable numbers of enemy were in them.

On November 27, the XX Corps made certain changes in the plan for the drive to the Saar as it had been presented in Field Order No. 13. Of these, the most important was the abandonment of plans for a Saar crossing by the 10th Armored Division, which now had only the mission of clearing the enemy from the division zone as far as the river. Connected with this change, the 358th Infantry Regiment of the 90th Division, formerly attached to the 10th Armored Division, was returned to its parent organization. Consequently, the mission of the 95th Division gained in importance. On it alone rested the Corps' hopes for a bridge and a bridgehead across the Saar, and there were parallels with the situation of November 10 when the XX Corps had to rely on the 95th Division for a bridge across the Moselle.

On November 28, the 95th Division again launched a morning attack with the 377th Infantry on the left, the 378th Infantry on the right and the 379th in reserve. The 377th Infantry's 2nd Battalion patrols made the first 95th Division penetration into Germany during the night of November 27-28, and by noon of November 28 both its assaulting battalions had crossed the border. On the left, the 2nd Battalion jumped off at 0800 with Company G to the left and Company F to the right. By 0930 Company G was in Guerstling^o and Company F in Leidingen,^o the first German town captured by the 95th Division. Pushing on from Leidingen,^o Company F entered Ihn without opposition before 1200. In the afternoon Company E on the left and Company F on the right moved out of Ihn^o toward Rammelfangen.^o The area through which they had to pass was honeycombed with German entrenchments and emplacements, and fog reduced visibility to an extremely low point. Company F advanced down the road to Rammelfangen^o in a column of platoons to about 500 yards from the town, where the leading platoon was held up by machine gun fire from the left. The two following platoons moved against these machine guns with marching fire and

were able to fight their way into Rammelfangen;^o at dusk they were joined by the rest of the company. Meanwhile, Company E, to the left of Company F, also ran into a series of machine gun emplacements, and it was not until the next morning that they were able to enter Rammelfangen.^o During the afternoon, Company G moved on to Niedaltdorf,^o where contact was made with the 90th Division.

The 3rd Battalion 377th also jumped off at 0800 with Company K on the left and Company L on the right. Company K first captured Schreckling,^o the last town before the border, against light opposition; six prisoners were taken. Moving on into Germany, the Company took Bedersdorf^o by 1000, finding the town undefended. Here tanks were brought up, and part of the company mounted them for the continuation of the attack toward Kerlingen.^o The town was well defended with entrenchments and tank traps, but the Americans advanced so rapidly through the fog that the Germans in the trenches were either killed or captured before they could profit from their prepared positions. The advance into the town was equally rapid, and it was some time before the Germans to the northeast in St. Barbara^o realized what had happened and stopped sending men into Kerlingen^o in the belief that it was still under their control.

On the right of the 3rd Battalion, Company L moved across the German border during the morning and at about noon was prepared to assault Ittersdorf.^o The scattered buildings on the outskirts of the town housed machine guns with excellent fields of fire over the intervening open spaces. A tank destroyer was brought up and with its aid the enemy were blasted out of the houses. The Germans attempted to make a stand in a cemetery on the edge of town, but by 1300 Ittersdorf^o had been cleared. The next objective was Dueren,^o but the Germans had already pulled out of it when Company L arrived.

The 1st Battalion 377th Infantry remained in regimental reserve throughout November 28. Following the 3rd Battalion and staying in the right of the regimental sector, it moved up for the night to Villing^o and Voelfling.^o

In the right portion of the Division zone the 378th Infantry met heavier resistance, and the threatened German attacks on the right flank materialized. In the left of the regimental sector, the 2nd Battalion drove forward successfully, although by evening it was clear that the Battalion situation had become precarious. At 0800 Company E launched an attack against the commanding ground south of Berviller.^o A small delaying force defended the ground, but it soon withdrew in the face of the attack. Company E then organized its position for defense and remained on the hill until the next day, pro-

viding protection to the exposed right flank of the battalion. Meanwhile, Company G moved around to the left and took Berviller,^o capturing one machine gun and killing three Germans. A patrol of platoon strength was sent ahead through the woods east of Berviller.^o and it advanced as far as Karlshof Farm.^o At 1330 Companies G and F launched a coordinated attack against the tremendous hill (the Sauberg)^o east of Berviller^o with the plan of continuing the attack into the towns of Felsberg^o and Alt-Forweiler.^o The Sauberg^o was successfully taken, and after a brief delay the advance was continued. While the attack was in progress and at a time when elements of the 2nd Battalion had already begun to move down toward Felsberg,^o a change of boundary was ordered which excluded Felsberg^o from the battalion zone. It was necessary to attempt the very difficult maneuver of checking an attack already begun, and it was some time before the necessary reorganization could be effected. Consequently, the Battalion commander decided to hold the Sauberg and to set up defensive positions there for the night. The problem of setting up these defenses was by no means an easy one, for a tank trap extended across the entire top of the hill, and a network of communication trenches covered the high ground. Under these conditions and given the size of the Sauberg,^o it was impossible for the companies engaged to cover all the approaches. During the night, the men could hear the sound of enemy movement from Felsberg^o to Saarlautern, but heavy fog and rain made accurate adjustment of artillery impossible. Early the morning of November 29, enemy vehicles were again heard but this time they were moving into Felsberg and coming from the Division right flank. All troops were warned of a probable German attack, and artillery was placed on the most likely assembly areas.

In the right of the 378th Infantry zone, the 1st Battalion's plan of attack for November 28 was that Company C should take Merten^o while Company A moved down from the Grande Saule^o and attacked Bibling,^o a southern suburb of Merten,^o from the south. Company B was to move on and occupy the high ground north of Merten.^o Stubborn opposition, however, prevented the carrying out of this plan in details. Company C jumped off in the attack against Merten^o at 0800, after a short artillery preparation. The Germans in the town let one platoon get in and then directed heavy fire on them from the houses, from Bibling^c to the south and from the wooded area to the north. As a result, Company C was unable to continue its advance into town. The battalion commander, Major Carl E. Eubank, ordered Company A to speed up its attack, and it moved rapidly through the woods with the intention of hitting Bibling^o from the southeast as they emerged. However, the speed-up had brought about some

confusion, and when the company came out of the woods it headed north across swamp lands instead of east into Bibling.^o Immediately, it was taken under fire by machine guns and 88's in Bibling.^o Those who had left the woods were pinned down, but Captain John W. Brown,^o the company commander, was able to organize in the woods a force of about platoon strength to swing around to attack Bibling^o from the southeast as originally planned. Meanwhile, Company B had by late afternoon worked its way to the high ground north of Merten,^o and it was ordered to attack the town from their position. The company came in at dusk with heavy supporting fire, which raised the fire which had held Companies A and C down, and the three companies moved into Merten^o and Bibling.^o However, by this time it was too dark to clear the towns, and sporadic fire-fights were carried on through the night.

The Germans were taking advantage of the Division's exposed right flank, and had begun to infiltrate into the Division zone through the great forest of La Houve^o (Foret Dominiale de la Houve), even using some fresh troops of the 25th Panzer Grenadier Division. Some of these troops had reinforced the garrison at Merten^o and others were on the outskirts of Falck;^o more important, they had seized the steep hill south of Falck,^o the Grande Saule,^o which is the key terrain feature of the area and which the 1st Battalion had found clear of enemy the day before. As a result, the communication lines of the 1st Battalion were broken, and even evacuation had to be halted along the Merten^o-Falck^o road after a number of casualties, including the regimental surgeon, had been incurred. Eventually, a secondary route of evacuation through Dalem^o in the 2nd Battalion zone was established but even this was not entirely safe.

In the meantime, Colonel Metcalfe had taken steps to deal with the dangerous situation developing on the right flank. The 3rd Battalion, in regimental reserve since the beginning of the drive across the Saar, had been moved forward to the right rear of the assaulting 2nd and 1st battalions and had been working with the regimental intelligence and reconnaissance platoon as well as with the 95th Reconnaissance Troop in patrolling the Division's right flank. On November 28 it was instructed to send a patrol to reconnoiter the area immediately to the west of Creutzwald,^o and Company K was given this mission while the remainder of the battalion remained in the general vicinity of Guerting.^o

When, the morning of November 28, the Germans began to infiltrate into the 378th Infantry zone, and when they seized the Grande Saule,^o Colonel Metcalfe^o first attempted to deal with the threat without committing the 3rd Battalion. Accordingly, he sent the 378th

Infantry's regimental scouts, a picked group of two officers and 60 men specially trained for raiding and patrol missions, against the Grande Saule.^o The mission was successful, and the scouts drove from the hill by assault a superior force consisting largely of fanatical recruits taken into the army from the air corps. However, the scouts were equipped for attack, not defense, and in any extended action their rapid fire weapons would soon be out of ammunition. As a result, when the Germans counterattacked the hill at dusk with a force double the size of the scouts, the latter were forced to withdraw.

Even before this counterattack occurred, however, it had become clear that the situation in the vicinity of Falck^o called for more strength than the scouts could muster. Accordingly, at 1445, the 3rd Battalion was ordered back to Falck.^o Company K, which had successfully accomplished its mission of reconnoitering west of Creutzwald,^o tried to drive to Falck^o through the woods, but they found the enemy in strength and had to pull back. Companies I and L attempted to move up from the south; they were also stopped by enemy in the woods, and it was clear that the Germans had considerable force and some supply elements there.

Colonel Metcalfe^o consequently ordered the 3rd Battalion to withdraw for the night to Hargarten^o and to plan to launch an attack early next morning. After discussions with General Twaddle,^o who hoped to keep his reserve regiment, the 379th Infantry, uncommitted in order to have it free for the final drive to the Saar and for the crossing operation, Colonel Metcalfe^o carried out his plan of withdrawing from Falck^o the few elements that remained there and of putting heavy artillery concentrations on the town during the night. In addition, he requested from Division heavily armored medium tanks, and arrangements were made for sending up the tanks that night.

November 28 saw a number of changes made by Corps in its provisions for support to the 95th Division on its right flank. It will be remembered that the 3rd Battalion 10th Infantry of the 5th Division had been attached to the 95th Division and had taken up positions in the eastern part of the Kerfent Woods. At 1300 November 28, the XX Corps directed that the battalion revert to the 5th Division and within a short time it had begun its move back to the vicinity of Metz. At 1605, before the move had been completed, Corps G-3 informed the 95th Division that the 3rd Battalion 10th Infantry was again attached in accordance with orders of higher headquarters for the protection of the left flank of XII Corps. The battalion was to move to l'Hopital,^o about four miles south of Creutzwald^o and about eight miles south of Merten.^o The 5th Division secured permission from Corps to postpone the move to l'Hopital^o until November 29

and on November 28 they merely returned to their previous positions. During the night, Corps informed the 95th Division that the 5th Division battalion was not to be used in an offensive role but was to be used defensively if required and to prevent the infiltration of enemy forces into that area. However, the morning of November 29 it was discovered that the area assigned to the 3rd Battalion 10th Infantry was occupied by the enemy, and the problem of the right flank remained unsettled.

On November 28, the 377th and 378th Infantry Regiments were moving onto their final objectives as indicated in Field Order No. 3 of November 24. Accordingly, Operations Instructions No. 9 was issued which provided for the continuation of the attack to the Saar. On seizure of the final objectives designated in Field Order No. 3, the 95th Division would continue the attack in zone and clear the enemy from the west bank of the Saar preparatory to forcing a crossing of the Saar and establishing a bridgehead east of the river. Orders for the crossing operation would be issued later. In detail, the plan provided that the 377th Infantry on the left and the 378th Infantry on the right would continue the attack while the 379th Infantry remained in reserve. The two attacking regiments, after they had cleared their zones of enemy to the Saar, would hold the west bank of the Saar with approximately one infantry battalion each and would assemble the remaining battalions in towns in close proximity to the river. In addition, they would emplace all regimental supporting weapons, including those of the infantry battalions, in forward position areas and would place maximum fires on enemy installations east of the Saar. The 379th Infantry would remain in its present area prepared for movement to a forward assembly area on Division order and would also make reconnaissance for possible employment in mopping up operations on the right flank of the 378th Infantry in the Forest de la Houve. The 95th Division Artillery, with its attached units, was to continue its direct and general support missions, and at the earliest opportunity was to place and to maintain maximum available fires on enemy installations east of the Saar; an overlay accompanying the operations instructions indicated the general areas for the three tank destroyer battalions (607th, 774th and 807th) whose weapons would be of primary importance in work against pill-boxes.

Accordingly, the attack was continued November 29, and in the course of its advance the Division met the most aggressive defense it was to face at any time in its combat history. In the 377th zone the attack was begun with the 2nd Battalion on the left and the 3rd

Battalion on the right; later the 1st Battalion, initially in reserve, was committed in an attack between the 2nd and 3rd battalions.

In the 2nd Battalion zone, it will be remembered that Company F had entered part of Rammelfangen^o the afternoon of November 28 and that Company E had been forced to hold up outside the town. The morning of November 29, Company E drove into Rammelfangen^o with marching fire and cleared the town with the assistance of Company F. On the left of the battalion zone, Company G advanced from Niedaltdorf^o to Kerprich-Hemmersdorf^o against sporadic small arms resistance; the town was taken by 1000, and the company was ordered to hold there. At the same time, on the right, Company E passed through Company F and by 1000 had taken the commanding ground east of Guisingen^o known as the Gallenberg.^o Company E then continued into Guisingen,^o from which it appeared that all but

A Victory Division infantryman, wounded in the Saar fighting, is transported to a medical aid station on a jeep litter, while a wounded Nazi sits in the front of the jeep.





Above: A 95th Division soldier, wounded in the bitter Saar fighting, is treated at an aid station while being comforted by a chaplain.

Below: A wounded 95th Division G. I. and wounded German soldiers are brought to an aid station where Division medics prepare to treat them.

a very few of the enemy had withdrawn. Soon, however, the enemy attempted to recapture the town with a force estimated at 50 men, and these were joined by some Germans who had remained on the far side of the town. Simultaneously, elements of the 1st Battalion advanced on Guisingen^o from the southwest, and it was only after a confused fire-fight, further complicated by the presence of German civilians, that the enemy was finally driven from the town. Company E, which was very low on ammunition, was ordered to remain in Guisingen,^o and elements of the 1st Battalion pushed on in the attack toward St. Barbara.^o Meanwhile, Company F of the 2nd Battalion moved past Company E on the left and before night had occupied Ober-Limberg,^o only a little more than a mile from the Saar.

On the right of the 377th zone, the 3rd Battalion attacked toward the high ground just west of the Saar and toward the town of Felsberg^o which, together with the adjacent Ober-Felsberg,^o is perched on the crest of this high ground. Company K attacked out of Kerlingen^o at 0730 through the morning fog and by 0830 had taken its objective, about a mile to the northeast. Company L attacked at 0800 northeast out of Dueren,^o and by 1030 it had captured the high ground which was its objective. On the right of the battalion zone, Company I advanced parallel to the other companies and was also able during the morning to capture the area assigned to it. All companies met stiff resistance, not only from mortars and artillery but from emplaced machine guns and 20-millimeter guns as well. Company I then swung south and began to attack Ober-Felsberg,^o but the Germans had excellent positions and progress was slow. At 1500, Colonel Gaillard^o decided to consolidate the 3rd Battalion positions and ordered Company K to withdraw to the towns of Dueren^o and Ittersdorf.^o Company L remained on the high ground it had seized, and Company I dug in just outside of Ober-Felsberg,^o prepared to continue the attack with additional support in the morning.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion had been committed between the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. Before it could advance it was necessary for the 2nd Battalion to take the high ground north of Guisingen^o and for the 3rd Battalion to take the high ground northeast of Kerlingen.^o Once these positions had been taken, the 1st Battalion jumped off, and at noon, as noted above, Companies B and C aided the 2nd Battalion in repulsing the counterattack on Guisingen^o and in finally clearing the town. In the early afternoon, the two companies continued toward St. Barbara,^o a town which like the Felsbergs was perched on the edge of the precipitous drop from the plateau to the Saar flatland. Moving abreast, Companies B and C reached the outskirts of St. Barbara^o by 1600 despite severe mortar and artillery fire.

The road from Guisingen^o to St. Barbara^o was cut by a wide and deep anti-tank ditch which could not be bypassed, and the tanks and tank destroyers attached to the 1st Battalion were unable to keep up with the infantry.

At dusk the troops were attempting to work their way further into the town, which consisted of little more than one long main street, when the Germans sent a Panther tank against them. The tank machine-gunned the street and fired '88' shells into the houses and then withdrew, apparently having exhausted its ammunition. Word was immediately sent back requesting bazookas and anti-tank guns and two 57-millimeter guns were manhandled across the tank trap as well as three jeeps. One of the guns was held in reserve and the other moved forward into firing position just inside town. The German tank returned, this time supported by infantry. The tank concentrated its fire on the anti-tank gun and on the jeep near it, while the enemy infantry managed to surround many of the houses occupied by the 1st Battalion troops. When the tank finally withdrew with its supporting infantry, it was discovered that the 57-millimeter anti-tank gun and one jeep had been wrecked, that the Germans had driven off one of the two remaining jeeps and that more than a platoon of Company C and about 20 men of Company B had been captured. The remaining troops hurriedly reorganized and Company C set up their defenses in two houses on opposite sides of the road at the very edge of town with the remaining anti-tank gun brought up behind one of the garages. Most of Company B dug in just outside of the town, and the heavy machine guns of Company D were also pulled back to the edge of town. During the night, the tank returned at intervals, but it was unable to drive the Americans out of St. Barbara.^o Its guns could blast the first floors of the houses in which Company C troops were located, but it could neither depress enough to hit the basement nor elevate high enough so as to hit the second floor. The enemy infantry accompanying the tank tried to fight their way into the houses but they were unsuccessful and suffered heavy casualties. A wounded German lieutenant crawled into one of the houses and fainted from loss of blood; when revived, he declared that he commanded eight tanks and 200 infantry in the defense of St. Barbara.^o Finally, shortly before daylight, a bazooka scored a hit on the tank and stalled it, and it was quickly knocked out when American tanks rolled into town at daylight. Plans had been made to continue the attack that morning, and the fight for St. Barbara would continue for the next two days.

In the 378th Infantry's zone, on the Division's right, the enemy was equally aggressive and, as in the case of the 377th Infantry, all

three battalions were committed. The morning of November 29 the expected counterattack against the 2nd Battalion, in position on the hill (the Sauberg^o) south of Felsberg,^o materialized at dawn. At 0735 Company G reported that there were approximately two platoons of enemy surrounding their positions. There was still a very heavy fog, and visibility was limited to a few yards. Nevertheless, reports from the front line made it clear that the infiltration was continuing, and by 0900 it was estimated that the enemy was employing a force of battalion strength equipped with many machine guns and four 20-millimeter guns. By 0930 the Germans had cut the communications from the forward elements of the battalion and were exerting heavy pressure on the isolated units. In an attempt to remedy the situation, the depleted reserve platoons of Companies F and G launched a counterattack supported by the attached tanks. This counterattack was successful in driving forward as far as the tank trap at the top of the hill; 35 enemy were captured, about 40 were killed and the tanks overrun the four 20-millimeter guns. The Germans were forced to withdraw to the other side of the tank trap, but the American counterattack came too late to prevent the capture of three rifle platoons and one machine gun platoon.

Throughout the early afternoon, the battle line swayed back and forth on the hill with the tank trap as a limiting point. The 2nd Battalion could drive the enemy across the trap with the aid of its supporting tanks, but it could not pursue the Germans further in the face of the defensive fires which the enemy set up. The Germans could infiltrate past the tank trap through the complicated system of communication trenches, but they were unable to gain complete control of the hill against the battalion and the supporting tanks. Finally, the remaining men of the two front line companies moved back to Karlshof Farm^o and set up defensive positions. Company E, which had been maintaining right flank protection south of Berviller,^o moved to the north of Karlshof Farm^o to protect the battalion's left flank and rear, and its place was taken by a composite task force made up primarily of headquarters personnel and of some few replacements who had just arrived. The Weapons Platoon of Company E was sent to support Companies F and G, since Company H, the heavy weapons company, had suffered severely in the German attack. Regiment ordered the battalion to hold, and in the evening the 2nd Battalion was told that the 3rd Battalion would attack through it the next day.

Meanwhile, on November 29, the 1st Battalion, which had gained a foothold in Merten^o the day before, began at first light to clear the town. The enemy still remained in considerable strength, but by

noon the town was held by the Americans. Regiment then ordered the battalion to remain in Merten^o until the 3rd Battalion had cleared up the situation to the south around Falck,^o and the 1st Battalion did not continue the attack until December 1.

The 3rd Battalion had pulled back to Hargarten^o the night of November 28-29, and during the night heavy artillery concentrations were placed on Falck, from which all American troops had been withdrawn late November 28. In preparation for the attack, artillery preparations were also fired on the dominating hill southeast of Falck^o (the Grande Saule^o) as well as on the smaller hill further south (the Petite Saule). At 0800 the battalion jumped off in the attack, with the support of tank destroyers and heavily armored medium tanks. Companies K and L assaulted the Grande Saule,^o and it was taken by 1000. Company I, with the support of the armor, then launched an attack on Falck^o and by early afternoon had the town completely under control. The Germans appeared to have withdrawn most of their forces from Falck,^o but they continued to dispute possession of the Grande Saule.^o During the afternoon, three counterattacks were directed against the hill, each with an estimated strength of 50 men. The troops employed in these counterattacks were young and poorly trained, bunching up as they advanced, and poorly supported with fire. Nevertheless, the attacks were passed with fanatical zeal, and most of the enemy had to be killed before they would stop. After its objectives had been taken, the 3rd Battalion sent patrols out to the north and secured the communications and supply route running from Falck^o north to the 1st Battalion in Merten. Later in the day, plans were made to have one battalion of the 379th Infantry, in Division reserve, relieve the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry in order that the latter might move around to the left and pass through the badly battered 2nd Battalion to attack the hill north of Berviller^o (the Sauberg). However, the actual relief and movement was not begun until November 30.

By the commitment of the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry, the immediate danger on the Division right flank had been removed, but the necessity of providing flank protection was delaying the Division at a time when the rapid completion of the drive to the Saar was imperative. Nevertheless, the morning of November 29, Corps denied General Twaddle's^o request for additional troops to assist in this mission. Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion 10th Infantry reported that the positions at l'Hopital^o to which Corps had directed it to proceed were occupied by the enemy. Accordingly, new arrangements were made. The 3rd Battalion was to proceed to Carling,^o held by the 2nd Cavalry

Group, and when the 2nd Cavalry Group had cleared l'Hopital^o the 3rd Battalion would move in as directed.

By November 29 the immediate preparations for the Saar crossing operation were begun. Several additional attachments were ordered. As of 1200 November 29, the light equipage platoons of the 509th and 537th Light Pontoon companies were attached to the Division, and the Division was notified that as of 1200 November 30 the 206th Engineer Battalion would be attached until the assault crossing of the Saar had been completed. Preparations were also being made for air operations to be coordinated with the crossing, and while no exact time for the assault had yet been set, plans had been made to begin bombardment of the enemy installations on both sides of the river at 1300 November 30. In view of the heavy casualties the 95th Division had suffered (the 378th Infantry, for example, had two battalions down to approximately 50 per cent of effective strength), an attempt was made to obtain emergency replacements through Third Army. However, the Division was informed that the replacements were not available and that there were other units which had greater need of them.

On November 30 the Division continued its attack, but the stubborn German opposition of the day before made it impossible to jump off in a coordinated advance early in the morning. Consequently, both the 377th and the 378th Infantry Regiments spent most of the morning in reorganizing and in preparation, and it was only in the afternoon that a main attack was begun. During this period of preparation, particular attention was given to making serviceable the roads to the rear in order to facilitate supply and evacuation.

In the 2nd Battalion zone, on the left of the 377th Infantry, the town of Itzbach^o was the day's objective and was attacked by Companies E and F while Company G remained in Kerprich-Hemmersdorf.^o Itzbach^o was taken by a maneuver in which Company F feinted from the south while Company E launched the main attack from the west. One platoon of Company F, with one platoon of heavy machine guns from Company H, moved out of Ober-Limberg^o and moved north through the woods until they were at the edge of the open space southeast of town. From there, at the agreed time, they opened fire with all available weapons. Meanwhile, Company E moved out of Guisingen^o and swung left through the woods to a point east of Itzbach.^o When Company F began its feint, elements of Company E infiltrated into the edge of town nearest them and took the enemy by surprise from the rear. Nevertheless, the enemy resisted stubbornly, and by dark only half of Itzbach^o had been taken.

Company E planned to finish clearing out the town in the morning, but the Germans had withdrawn during the night.

In the 1st Battalion zone, the battle for St. Barbara^o continued through November 30 without decisive result. It will be remembered that when American tanks arrived at dawn they knocked out a German tank which had been disabled by bazooka fire during the preceding night. However, the Germans had brought up more tanks and had placed two of them in mutually supporting positions on a short cross street near the center of town. As a result, they were able to keep American tanks and tank destroyers at a distance during the day. One American tank was knocked out by a German anti-tank gun firing from the vicinity of Felsberg,^o and another was destroyed by a direct hit from one of the German tanks. Meanwhile, one of the two German tanks was driven from its position with a bazooka hit, and once in the open was knocked out by American tanks. The other was disabled by bazooka fire, but sometime during the next night it was towed out by a retriever, only to be abandoned on the edge of town. Companies A and B continued the house-to-house fighting for St. Barbara^o during the day, and Company C was sent to take over the high ground to the south of the town in order to provide better positions for the supporting tank destroyers.

The 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry was poised to continue its attack into Ober-Felsberg^o and Felsberg^o the morning of November 30, but General Twaddle^o ordered the attack postponed until it could be made in coordination with the attack of the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry to the right. Accordingly, it was not until the afternoon that the advance was resumed. On the left, Company L finished clearing German positions on the high ground northeast of Kerlingen.^o Meanwhile, Companies I and K at 1430 launched the main attack toward Felsberg,^o which had been a center of German counterattack movements during the preceding days. Despite heavy mortar and artillery fire, the two companies quickly captured Ober-Felsberg,^o where they took 150 prisoners, killed 25 of the enemy and captured six machine guns. Company K pushed on toward Felsberg^o and worked its way across a tank ditch to the outskirts of the town. One of the tanks in support of the attack was preparing to cross a bridge over the ditch when it drew concentrated '88' fire, and the bridge was destroyed. A number of casualties were suffered by troops who had been seeking cover near the bridge; both artillery observers were wounded and their radio was destroyed. Soon after this, the Germans counterattacked with infantry and armor. Companies K and I, with a machine gun platoon of Company M, opened fire on the advancing Germans. In addition, the artillery, though now firing with-

out forward observation, hit the counterattacking force heavily, and the Germans withdrew. The 3rd Battalion was unable to gain complete control of Felsberg^o that night, and preparations were made to continue the attack next morning. Company L, its mission accomplished, moved south into Ober-Felsberg^o for the night.

In the 378th zone, the 3rd Battalion, in the vicinity of Falck,^o was relieved during the morning by the 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry. It then swung around to the left through Berviller^o where it was to launch an attack on the Sauberg^o after passing through the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, which would then revert to regimental reserve. This attack was coordinated with the attack of the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry for Felsberg,^o and the 378th Infantry jumped off half an hour later than the 377th Infantry. Company L made the attack and took the hill (the Sauberg^o) against rifle, automatic weapon, and artillery fire. The 3rd Battalion then held up, and Company I prepared to move into Alt-Forweiler^o the next day. The 1st Battalion 378th Infantry made no extensive attack November 30, although it sent elements up to the high ground northeast of Merten.^o When the 3rd Battalion had taken the Sauberg,^o which did not take place until late in the afternoon, it was to be prepared to continue the advance the next day.

On the extreme right of the Division front, the 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry, stationed in the vicinity of Falck,^o reported no enemy activity in their zone on November 30. Meanwhile, the XX Corps had on November 30 taken steps to effect a final solution to the problem of the exposed right flank of the 95th Division. At 0930, Corps attached to the Division a regimental combat team from the 5th Division. (The team consisted of the 10th Infantry Regiment with normal attachments in addition to the 5th Reconnaissance Troop. It will be remembered that the 3rd Battalion 10th Infantry had been attached to the 95th Division since November 26 with one short break and was already in position in the Kerfent Woods;^o the remainder of the 10th Infantry was in the vicinity of Metz when the order for their attachment was issued.) Corps informed Division that the combat team, unlike the earlier attachments, was not restricted to defensive use but that it might be employed in any way the Division wished, except that it was not to take part in the river crossing operation.

Accordingly, General Twaddle,^o by Operations Instructions No. 10 of November 30, constituted Task Force Bell (named for the commanding officer of the 10th Infantry), consisting of the 5th Division combat team together with Company D of the 778th Tank Battalion. It was given the mission of attacking east into the La Houve Forest^o

at 0800 December 1. On Division order, it was to continue the attack to its second objective, the northern part of Karlsbrunn Forest,^o and finally to its third objective, the west bank of the Saar in the vicinity of Hostenbach^o and Wehrden.^o Task Force Bell closed in at 1845 November 30 and preparations were made to launch the attack next day.

Meanwhile, at 1530 November 30, Corps attached additional troops to the 95th Division with the same general mission as Task Force Bell, that of cleaning out the area between the 378th Infantry and the XX Corps right boundary. The new attachments included the 6th Cavalry Group (minus the 28th Cavalry Squadron), Company C of the 602nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, Company B 293rd Engineer Battalion and the 5th Ranger Battalion. The mission of these units was defined by 95th Division Operations Instructions No. 11, also of November 30. On its arrival in the Division zone, at approximately 1200 December 1, the 6th Cavalry Group with its reinforcements was to relieve the 3rd Battalion 10th Infantry in the vicinity of Carling^o as soon as practicable. The 3rd Battalion 10th Infantry would then be free to take part in the advance of Task Force Bell. The 6th Cavalry Group was given a zone to the right of Task Force Bell, and it was ordered to attack at 0800 December 2 with the city of l'Hopital^o as its initial objective. Thereafter, it was to conduct reconnaissance in force to clear all enemy from its assigned zone.

Task Force Bell attacked into the La Houve Forest^o as ordered at 0800 December 1 and made rapid progress against light resistance. However, late November 30, the Division was informed that at 1200 December 1 the task force would revert to 5th Division control and that at the same time the 6th Cavalry Group with its reinforcements would be released from attachment to the 95th Division and attached to 5th Division. By noon of December 1, therefore, the Division right flank was adequately covered by forces under independent command, and the Division, freed of this responsibility, could concentrate on its preparations for the Saar crossing.

THE BRIDGE AND THE BRIDGEHEADS

The 95th Division had attacked toward the Saar on November 25, and there was to be no break in the fighting until after the Division had seized and expanded a bridgehead at Saarlautern. Nevertheless, on November 30 and December 1, the character of the operation was changing; while the infantry battalions continued to attack town after town, extensive preparations were being made behind the front lines for a new phase of the advance. The cross-country drive was almost over the assault of the bridgehead was approaching.

The Germans had conducted delaying actions throughout the drive across the slowly rising Lorraine Plateau, but they had offered no stubborn and aggressive defense until the Division neared the crest of the plateau, just before it falls off steeply to the Saar plain. Here, at St. Barbara,^o for example, and on the Sauberg,^o the enemy had counterattacked fiercely, even throwing in troops and armor of the crack 21st Panzer Division. However, by the evening of November 30, the 95th Division held almost the entire length of the plateau crest, and its troops could look down on the few miles of flat country west of the Saar and at the rising ground dotted with its innumerable pillboxes across the river. The reasons for the fierce resistance along the Saar heights were now apparent; once the Germans had been forced off the plateau, they would ultimately be compelled to retire east of the Saar, though they might harass with artillery the Division's advance across the Saar plain and fight a house-to-house delaying action in Saarlautern. While the Division was breaching the last German defense line before the Saar, the problem of its exposed right flank had been settled by the attachment of sufficient troops adequately to protect it, and on December 1 these troops would pass to 5th Division control. Consequently, the 95th Division had reached a line from which it could launch its final drive for a Saar bridgehead, and it was free to concentrate on the bridgehead operation. Late November 30, Field Order No. 4 was issued, assigning to divisional and attached units their parts in the crossing of the Saar.

The field order first noted that enemy resistance had stiffened perceptibly in the preceding two days. Strong defense of the towns

along the Saar heights had shown that the Germans meant to delay the advance of the 95th Division to the Saar as long as possible, even at the cost of small amounts of armor and larger amounts of infantry. Relatively little was known of the German order of battle. In the crossing zone west of the Saar, the Division was opposed on the north by elements of the 559th Volksgrenadier Division and on the south by elements of the 347th Infantry Division. Both these divisions had been hard hit in previous fighting and were far below strength. The 559th Division had been formed as part of the twenty-sixth wave, one of the last German classes to be called to arms, and there was irony in its title, *Twilight of the Gods* (*Goetterdaemmerung*). The 559th Division had been first contacted in the Nancy area in early September, and it originally contained three regiments with an estimated total strength of 9,000. Since then it had lost heavily. One of its regiments, the 1127th, had been dissolved and its remnants used to strengthen the 1125th and 1126th Regiments. Furthermore, in

A pillbox on the western outskirts of Saarlautern. This was not one of the more formidable type met east of the Saar.



each of these regiments, the 3rd Battalion had been dissolved to strengthen the other two. The German 347th Division had also been committed in early September, and its history had been much the same as that of the 559th Division. In addition to these units on the line, the Germans had employed elements of the 21st Panzer Division in the counterattacks at St. Barbara, and it was believed that this division was either in reserve in the 95th Division zone or that it was manning the Siegfried Line across the river. The German dispositions east of the Saar were uncertain. Presumably, they would attempt to withdraw as many of their troops from the west as possible. In addition, it was expected that a considerable number of low-grade fortress troops would be used in manning the Siegfried Line.

In any case, the Siegfried Line in itself was a most formidable obstacle. The construction of the Siegfried Line was begun in 1936 immediately after the reoccupation of the demilitarized Rhineland; by May 1940 it had been extended from Basel in the south to Kleves in the north. After the fall of France, no further work had been done apart from the dismantling of the wire entanglements and the ploughing in of some of the field works. Concealment had been carefully planned from the beginning, and earth was piled around and on top of the forts. Four years of inactivity and undisturbed natural growth greatly improved this concealment, and the forts had become extremely difficult to locate, even where they were situated in open country. In the towns, of course, no such change had taken place, but here the Germans had introduced a variety of methods of camouflage, and the 95th Division would find pillboxes in the guise of barns, ticket offices and flower shops.

The Siegfried Line consisted for the most part of a zone of small concrete forts, pillboxes or bunkers; these were located for mutual support and to produce closely interlocked bands of fire. The line reached its maximum depth in the Saar area, both in the XX Corps zone and to the south, and the distance from the anti-tank obstacles on the forward edge of the position to the rather scattered works in the rear was approximately three miles. The system of forts also reached its greatest density in the Saar with about 40 forts in a 1,000-yard square. In the XX Corps zone, the line had been doubled and in addition to the forward line of defense, just described, there was a second line of greater depth some 10 or 15 miles to the rear.

The forts were by no means uniform in construction, but three main types could be distinguished: machine gun forts, antitank forts and unarmed shelters. In general, the fighting forts were comparatively small with a normal complement of about 10 men, and there were usually only one or two fighting chambers and one or two living

rooms. The embrasures or firing openings were generally situated in the forward part of the fort, and the fields of fire were to the flank, the works being frequently in defilade from the front. The antitank forts were somewhat larger than those with machine guns, but they were built to contain only the standard antitank gun of 1936-1940, the 37-millimeter, not the 88's of 1944-45. Finally, there were several larger forts to the rear of the line containing artillery up to 105-millimeter in size. A proportion of the works were fitted with special steel cupolas for observation, and in this case it was normal for the cupola only to be visible with the rest of the fort covered with dirt. Dimensions varied and the later forts were built with greater strength. In general, the forts of 1938 and earlier had reinforced concrete walls and roofs five feet thick, while the armor plate surrounding the loopholes was three and seven-eighths inches thick. In the case of forts constructed after 1938, these dimensions were increased to six feet eight inches and to seven and seven-eighths inches respectively.

In the 95th Division zone, the Siegfried Line was located to take full advantage of the defensive strength of the Saar terrain. The forts could cover with fire the river and both its banks, and back from the river the main band of fortifications protected the rising ground to the east. In addition, the Germans had numerous strongpoints in Saarlautern which could serve as outposts of the Siegfried Line and from which they could delay an advance to the river. The bridges over the Saar were prepared with demolitions, and the enemy planned to blow them after withdrawing the main body of his forces. If the 95th Division nevertheless forced an assault boat crossing, the Germans had available large amounts of artillery; with their superior observation from the high ground to the east they would be able both to harass the American bridgeheads and to knock out any temporary bridges which the Division could construct. It was against this array of defensive strength that the 95th Division, poised on the high ground above the Saar plain, prepared to attack for its bridge and its bridgeheads.

The 95th Division attack according to Field Order No. 8 was to be coordinated with the XX Corps drive to the northeast. Although the Division would initially cross the Saar alone, Corps was prepared to continue the attack by a large-scale penetration of the Siegfried Line, by a destruction of the enemy defenses in zone and by a resumption of the attack to the northeast. The XIX Tactical Air Command was to support the Corps advance and, if the weather permitted, heavy and medium bombers would bomb the Siegfried Line defenses on the east bank of the Saar in the 95th Division zone prior to the attack.

The 95th Division, with an imposing list of attachments and of

supporting troops,¹ would attack on Corps order, to seize crossings of the Saar between Saarlautern and Pachten,^o to establish a bridgehead in the crossing area, and to expand the bridgehead to the north, uncovering Rehlingen^o to facilitate bridging operations of the 90th Infantry Division. The 377th Infantry was to attack on Division order, closely following air bombardment if the missions were flown, and clear all enemy from the west bank of the Saar River in the left of the Division zone. It would immediately emplace all supporting weapons and direct maximum fires on enemy defenses east of the Saar; in addition, it would support with maximum available fires the attack of the 379th Infantry to its initial bridgehead objective. Thereafter, it would be prepared on Division order to assemble as Division reserve in the vicinity of Wallerfangen^o and Beaumarais,^o and it would be ready to cross the Saar and continue the attack to the east or northeast in the zone of the 379th Infantry. The 378th Infantry, on the right of the 95th Division sector, would also attack to the Saar, clearing all enemy. On Division order, it would force a crossing of the Saar, seize its initial bridgehead objective, making contact with the 379th Infantry on the left, and be prepared to continue the attack rapidly to the east. The 379th Infantry was to advance rapidly to the Saar on Division order and to attack, making the main effort of the Division, through elements of the 377th Infantry, and to seize an initial bridgehead objective. On Division order, it would be prepared to seize and to hold the Rehlingen^o objective. Division Artillery would support the Division attack, massing its fires in support of the 379th Infantry. The 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion would initially provide anti-mechanized defense with particular attention to the zone of the 378th Infantry. It was to be prepared to move rapidly east of the Saar to provide close support of the attacking infantry regiments with particular attention to the zone of the 379th Infantry. The engineers were to support the crossing of the assault waves with one platoon in each regimental area. In addition, they were to construct a number of bridges: An infantry support bridge in the 379th zone; a floating Bailey bridge north of Saarlautern; a floating treadway bridge between Lisdorf^o and Ens Dorf;^o and one foot

¹Attached to the 95th Division were the 778th Tank Battalion (less Company A), the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 547th A.A.A. Battalion, Companies A, B and D of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion, the 206th Engineer Battalion, the 84th Chemical (Smoke Generator) Battalion, Battery B 244th Field Artillery Battalion (22 Landing Vehicles Tracked), the Light Equipage Platoon of the 509th Engineer Light Ponton Company and the Light Equipage Platoon of the 537th Engineer Light Ponton Company.

In support of the 90th and 95th divisions were elements of III Corps Artillery, and in support of the 95th Division were the 1103rd Engineer Group, the 4th Tank Destroyer Group and the 112th A.A.A. Group.

bridge in each regimental zone. Finally, the engineers were to maintain two infantry support rafts in each regimental zone.

The Corps order for the attack was planned in coordination with the bombing missions, and on November 30 the Division was given a tentative schedule for these missions and for the attack to follow them. If the bombers were able to complete their missions on December 1 and 2 before 1400, the 95th Division was to attack immediately following this and force the crossing. If the missions were not completed until after 1400, the Division would force the crossing at daylight on each successive morning. If the missions could only be completed on December 3, the Division would attack immediately if the missions were completed before 1400; if they were completed after 1400, permission would have to be obtained from the Corps commander to delay the attack until the following morning. If the missions were not completed by December 3, the Corps commander would order the Division to attack either at 1400 on December 3 or at daylight December 4. And on November 30 the Division was informed that the missions would start on December 1. Accordingly, eight groups of medium bombers flew bombing missions in the vicinity of Saarlautern from 1100 to 1215. Results of the mission could not be immediately determined because of poor visibility, but the Air Corps reported that the missions were generally successful. In addition, a fighter bomber squadron struck at a strongpoint in Saarlautern and at the town of Ens Dorf.^o The infantry regiments had been told that the safety line was 3,000 yards back of the river and that they should not advance closer until the bombing mission was over and until Division gave the order to continue the attack. The morning was spent in mopping-up operations and in preparations for the advance, and it was only after 1230 that the main attacks were launched and the final drive for the bridgehead began.

The 377th Infantry, on the left of the Division sector, met stubborn resistance on December 1, especially in the zone of the 1st and 2nd battalions. On the left, the 2nd Battalion had cleared Itzbach^o with Company E by 0805, Company G was still in Kerprich-Hemmersdorf^o and Company F was in Ober-Limberg^o. During the morning, Company E attempted to clear the woods between Itzbach^o and Ober-Limberg^o so that they might have a supply route open. The woods proved to be well defended with frequent machine gun emplacements. A total of seven machine guns were captured, but by late afternoon the Germans were still resisting, artillery was inflicting many casualties and it was necessary to withdraw. Company F attempted to push ahead from Ober-Limberg^o in the afternoon, but it also ran into woods strongly defended with large numbers of automatic weapons

and by evening the company was forced to withdraw to the town. Company G, meanwhile, had been moved from Kerprich-Hemmersdorf^o back to Guisingen^o in order to provide a possible reserve force to meet the threat of a tank and infantry break-through in the vicinity of St. Barbara.^o

The 1st Battalion continued the bitter struggle for St. Barbara.^o Companies A and B were in the village, and Company C was to the south of town in the woods where the tank destroyers were located. The Germans again brought their armor into St. Barbara^o and during the morning employed flame-throwers as well. At 1330 the attempt to drive the enemy out of town was making little progress and casualties had been heavy. There was only one officer left in Company A and one in Company C. Plans were made to send troops from the 2nd Battalion to aid the 1st, but the 2nd Battalion was fully engaged in Itzbach^o and Ober-Limberg.^o By evening of December 1, the situation in St. Barbara^o was little changed from what it had been in the morning.

In the 3rd Battalion sector, Companies I and K continued the attack on Felsberg^o and on its closely joined suburb, Unter-Felsberg.^o It was necessary to advance down the steep slope from the plateau by a long winding road, and the troops received heavy mortar and artillery concentrations. A tank appeared, but after a hit with a bazooka, though the safety pin had not been pulled, withdrew. Before noon the 3rd Battalion had control of most of the town, but small groups continued to resist and it was not until 1500 that the town was completely cleared. Felsberg,^o as well as Unter-Felsberg^o and Alt-Forweiler,^o had been the target of frequent artillery concentrations and TOT missions during the preceding days, both in order to break up counterattacking forces and to prepare for the Division advance and the destruction in evidence was a remarkable tribute to the efficacy of Division Artillery.

To the right of the 377th Infantry, the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry continued its advance. Company L moved on to take the high ground east of Unter-Felsberg,^o and Company I moved to the right against Alt-Forweiler.^o In this operation the tanks supporting the 3rd Battalion mistook their direction and turned into Berus.^o The town was found to be lightly defended, and on regimental order the 3rd Battalion sent a platoon into the town to hold it. The mistake in direction had fortunate consequences since it enabled the 1st Battalion to move into a better position for its difficult attack on the high ground south of Berus.^o

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion had attacked from the vicinity of Merten with the mission of seizing the steep cone-shaped hill (the

Klareichen)^o which lies to the south of Berus^o and which overlooks Bisten.^o The battalion plan called for Company B to move out of Merten^o and outpost the high ground to the north, thereby protecting the 1st Battalion flank and maintaining contact with the 3rd Battalion. Company C, followed by Company A, was to work its way through the narrow strip of woods (the Berus Woods) which ran all the way from Merten^o to its objective along the steep slope between the Lorraine plateau and the Saar plain. Once Company C had taken its objective, Company A would drive down into Bisten.^o

This plan, however, could not be carried out, although the movement of the 3rd Battalion tanks into Berus^o made it possible for the battalion to capture its objectives the next day. On December 1, Company B, as planned, moved without incident to the north and outposted the hill. Company C proceeded through the woods, followed by Company A, until it came to the open draw about 500 yards south of its hill objective. Here, heavy small arms fire was received from the woods on the other side of the draw as well as artillery and mortar concentrations from the hill. The enemy mortars were particularly effective and tree bursts caused many casualties. Company C, already far below strength and with a large percentage of inexperienced replacements, lost its remaining officers, became disorganized and withdrew. In the resulting confusion, it became necessary to pull back the entire battalion for reorganization. When, in the afternoon, the battalion commander heard that the tanks supporting the 3rd Battalion had moved into Berus,^o he sent Company B around to the left into the town. During the night Companies A and C also moved into Berus^o and the 1st Battalion was in a strong position to continue the attack south to its objectives the next morning.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, in regimental reserve, remained in Berviller^o and reorganized. The battalion had lost heavily in the previous fighting and particularly in the German counterattack of November 29. As reorganized, therefore, Company E, the strongest company, had three rifle platoons of 25 men each and a weapons platoon; Company F had two rifle platoons of 22 men each and a weapons platoon; Company G had two rifle platoons of 20 men each; and Company H had one machine gun platoon and one 81-millimeter mortar platoon.

Finally, on December 1, the 379th Infantry, which had been in reserve since the beginning of the Saar drive and which now was assigned the Division main effort for the crossing, was moving into position for an attack through the elements of the 377th Infantry the morning of December 2. The 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry began to move forward at 1100. It had been originally planned to move

through Felsberg,^o but since isolated resistance continued there during the early afternoon, permission was obtained to bypass the town on the north. The 2nd Battalion halted for the night beyond Ober-Felsberg^o and prepared to jump off in the attack the next morning. The 1st Battalion began movement forward along the route of the 2nd Battalion with the mission of forcing a crossing of the Saar on Division order. Finally, the 3rd Battalion, which had been maintaining defensive positions in the vicinity of Falck,^o received orders late December 1 to assemble the next morning and to move to Remering.^o

During the night of December 1-2, Division was informed that it would again have air support from medium bombers and fighter bombers. The time for the medium bombers was set at 1000, and the regiments were accordingly notified to remain back of the bomb safety line until ordered to attack. Ten groups of medium bombers (approximately 400 planes) participated in the mission, dropping their bombs on Saarlautern and its suburbs. Immediately behind them, fighter bombers pinpointed the barracks and military installations on the western edge of the city. Shortly after 1200, the bombing mission had been completed and the regiments were told to attack.

In the 377th sector on the left of the Division zone, the 2nd Battalion finished cleaning out the woods in the vicinity of Itzbach^o and Ober-Limberg^o where the resistance had been so stubborn December 1. The Germans had withdrawn and little opposition was met. Patrols were sent as far as the high ground north of Wallerfangen^o without making contact with the enemy, but artillery fire was received at this point.

On the right, the 1st Battalion finally cleaned up the resistance in St. Barbara.^o In the morning, the American forces were withdrawn from the town and heavy artillery concentrations were placed on it. At noon, the 1st Battalion moved back into St. Barbara^o and by 1300 it had possession of the entire town. An attempt was made to continue the advance, but this proved impossible because of the heavy mining of the east road and it was necessary to wait until morning for the continuation of the attack. During the day, in an effort to meet at least partially the great need of the 377th Infantry for replacements, Division assigned to the regiment the Defense Platoon of Division Headquarters Company with the understanding that it would be used as a unit and would be returned when replacements became available. Colonel Gaillard^o assigned the Defense Platoon to the 1st Battalion, in view of the extremely heavy casualties the battalion had suffered in the St. Barbara^o fighting.

On the right of the 377th zone, the 3rd Battalion had as its objective Beaumarais,^o a western suburb of Saarlautern. The battalion moved

up as close as possible without crossing the bomb safety line and held up until the bombing was completed. The advance was resumed, and Companies K and L moved toward the town in an extended skirmish line. No resistance was met and by 1430 Beaumarais^o was completely under control. Later in the day, the entire 3rd Battalion moved in. Patrols were sent to Wallerfangen,^o and although the town was not entered, it appeared to be free of enemy.

The evening of December 2 General Twaddle^o directed Colonel Gaillard^o to get his supporting weapons, particularly the direct fire weapons, up to the river. The regiment was to be reorganized once it had taken its objectives, and the river line was to be held as lightly as possible so that in case of emergency the regiment could be committed east of the Saar.

In the 378th Infantry's zone, the 3rd Battalion jumped off on the left at 0800 December 2. By 1000, Company I had taken Neu-Forweiler,^o where it received heavy fire from German emplacements to the east. Company K then moved up and passed through Neu-Forweiler^o to take the high ground 1,000 yards to the east. Company L jumped off from the high ground east of Unter-Felsberg^o and at 1300 had occupied Pikard^o without opposition. It accordingly pushed on to Holzmuehle^o and by dark had sent out patrols to probe the defenses of Lisdorf.^o

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion had attacked on the right. Stiff opposition was encountered and it was forced to contend with an exposed right flank since the 5th Division elements were not yet abreast of the 95th Division front. At 0800, the battalion attacked south out of Berus^o with Company A on the right and Company B on the left against the hill to the south (the Klareichen).^o An extremely heavy artillery preparation had been placed on the hill. By 0900, the objective had been taken with some of the enemy killed and the rest in retreat toward Bisten^o and the Karlsbrunn^o forest. After a pause for reorganization, the attack was continued into Bisten^o and by 1200 the town was cleared of the enemy.

In the afternoon, the battalion continued the attack with two farms about a mile and a half from the Saar River as its objectives (Sablonhof^o and Sandhof).^o Tanks of Company C 778th Tank Battalion were attached to the 1st Battalion for the advance and most of Companies B and C were mounted on them. The swampy nature of the country held the tanks to the roads, but the mere threat of armor was enough to flush many Germans out of the Karlsbrunn Forest. In their withdrawal, these came under the observation of Company I, 3rd Battalion, at Neu-Forweiler^o and numerous casualties were inflicted. By evening, Company B had occupied Sablonhof^o and Company C

Sandhof^o and several 88's were captured which had been abandoned by their crews. As the battalion approached the Saar River, it was subjected to constantly increasing artillery fire from across the river.

The 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, in regimental reserve, was used on December 2 to guard against threats to the exposed right flank. One company was stationed at Bisten,^o one company at Berus^o and the remainder of the battalion was at Alt-Forweiler.^o

The 379th Infantry Regiment was moving ahead preparatory to forcing the crossing of the Saar. The 2nd Battalion, which had passed through elements of the 377th Infantry the preceding evening, attacked at 0730 December 2 and by 0820 had captured the high ground northwest of Pikard,^o which was its initial objective. Here it held up on the reverse slope during the bombardment and at 1235 the attack was continued toward Saarlautern. It was necessary to advance across approximately 1,000 yards of open terrain, pitted by shell holes and craters; in addition, a drainage ditch too wide to jump and about five feet deep ran across the line of advance. After the ditch had been crossed, machine guns and mortars opened up, but the move to the outskirts of the city was accomplished with marching fire. By 1600, three companies were in Saarlautern and a small area had been cleared against fierce house-to-house opposition.

The 1st Battalion 379th Infantry had advanced from Villing to Felsberg by bounds during the morning and had closed in there at 1245. At 1600, it was ordered forward to the barracks on the western edge of Saarlautern and by 2000 it had completed its move. The 3rd Battalion had also moved forward during the day, first from Falck^o to Remering,^o where it closed at 1020. In the early afternoon it proceeded to Unter-Felsberg,^o where it closed in at 1735.

The general situation the evening of December 2 was not such as to encourage hopes for the rapid establishment of a Saar bridgehead. The 378th Infantry, on its right sector, was approximately 2,000 yards from the Saar and, on its left, the town of Lisdorf^o lay between it and the river. The 379th Infantry had begun an attack on Saarlautern, but the type of opposition encountered did not indicate that the town could be cleared rapidly. The 2nd Battalion reported that there were five or six Germans in every house in Saarlautern in their zone of advance and that while the enemy did not appear to be well organized they were fighting fiercely. At the same time, it must be remembered that the 95th Division had been fighting an offensive action without an appreciable break since November 8. The cumulative effect of unreplaced losses were beginning to tell. In the G-3 Periodic Report of December 2, for the first time the item "Combat Efficiency" did not receive the rating of Excellent or Superior. Instead, the G-3

declared that the combat efficiency of the Division was "Materially reduced due to heavy casualties and continual operations over an extended period. Replacements unavailable. Combat effective strength of four infantry battalions reduced to 55 per cent or less."

Under these conditions, if the Division were to proceed in orthodox fashion by driving through Saarlautern in force toward the bridges, the establishment of a bridgehead would be at best a precarious venture. First, the Germans would have adequate warning and ample opportunity to blow all the bridges. Second, the enemy would be able completely to alert and to organize the defenses east of the Saar. Finally, the combat effective strength of the Division would be still further reduced by costly house-to-house fighting through Saarlautern. Accordingly, Colonel Robert L. Bacon, commanding the 379th Infantry, decided to try for the one solution which would avoid these difficulties, the rapid seizure of a main bridge before the Germans could blow it. The plan was simple and depended for its success on brilliant execution and on an accurate estimate of the German military mind. A battalion would cross the Saar north of Saarlautern and would move down the east bank of the Saar to take the bridge from the rear. At the same time, a reinforced rifle company would bypass the main body of German resistance in Saarlautern and drive quickly through the city to seize and hold the south end of the bridge.¹

The plan was put into effect with rapidity. At 2045 the plan was presented to the Division G-3 with the request that he submit it for approval to General Twaddle;^o at 2100 approval had been given. At 2130 Colonel Bacon^o issued his order to the three battalions. The 1st Battalion, with one platoon of the 379th Infantry's Antitank Company and one platoon of Company C, 320th Engineer Battalion, attached and with one platoon of the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion in direct support, was given the mission of forcing a crossing of the Saar north of Saarlautern beginning at 0545 December 3, capturing the northern approaches to the bridge at Saarlautern and preventing the enemy from executing demolition of the bridge. The 3rd Battalion, with one platoon of the Antitank Company and one squad of Company C, 320th Engineer Battalion, attached and with one 155-millimeter self-propelled gun in direct support, was given the mission of attacking with one reinforced rifle company along the west bank of the Saar and of capturing the southern approaches to the bridge. The

¹The Saar flows generally from south to north, but at Lisdorf^o it turns sharply east and makes a wide arc around Saarlautern. It flows from northeast to southwest at the point where the bridge was seized, and consequently the Saarlautern end of the bridge is the southern, or, more precisely, the southeastern end.

2nd Battalion was to continue its mission of cleaning up resistance in Saarlautern.

At 2230, Lt. Colonel Tobias R. Philbin,^o commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, issued the following oral orders to his assembled company commanders:

The enemy holds the Saarlautern area and the area across the river, strength unknown. Strength of enemy fortifications also unknown.

Company L attacks at 0745 December 3 with mission of securing intact the south end of the bridge across the Saar River in Saarlautern.

This battalion (one platoon Antitank Company attached—one platoon Company C 320th Engineer Battalion and one platoon Company B 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion in direct support) will force crossing of Saar River and capture northern approaches to bridge and prevent enemy from destroying it.

Engineers will deliver assault boats at 0200 December 3 and crossing will begin at 0545. Secrecy is vital, noise must be kept to a minimum and no shots will be fired until necessary.

Crossing will be in two waves:

First wave: Company B on the right, Company C on the left.

Second wave: Company A on the right, Company D on the left. Battalion will move in a column of companies on east bank of river in the order, B, C, A and D companies.

With speed and secrecy the mission will be successfully completed.

I shall be in the center boat of the second wave and at the rear of Company B in the advance on the east side.

Meanwhile, Maj. Raymond F. Kroening,^o commanding officer of the 3rd Battalion, had chosen Company L to execute the 3rd Battalion assignment and at 2200 issued orders to the company commander, Lt. Edward G. Eldridge:

The enemy holds the Saarlautern area and the area across the river, strength unknown. Strength of enemy fortifications also unknown.

The 1st Battalion attacks at 0545 December 3, making a river crossing in the vicinity of the barracks, with the mission of securing the northern end of the bridge in Saarlautern.

At 0745 December 3 you will attack with the mission of securing intact the south end of the bridge across the Saar River in Saarlautern.

You will have attached one squad of Company C 320th Engineer Battalion. One squad of the Ammunition and Pioneer Pla-

toon, one platoon of M-36 tank destroyers of Company B 607th Tank destroyer Battalion and one self-propelled 155-millimeter gun will be in direct support. You will move to the bridgehead as rapidly as possible and secure it, if necessary bypassing small enemy pockets of resistance to reach your objective. After the bridge is secured, clear out the bypassed enemy resistance in your zone.

Make contact with the 1st Battalion on the left and with the 2nd Battalion on your right as soon as possible.

One litter jeep will move as far as the 2nd Battalion Aid Station and will evacuate on call.

Synchronize watches.

Both the 1st and 3rd battalions carried out their missions with complete success. Shortly before midnight, the 1st Battalion sent out patrols consisting of all the officers who were to take part in the action and of one squad from each company. The river bank at the crossing site was reconnoitered and at 0100 the patrols returned. The engineers had brought up the boats, and at 0515 these were taken the final 200 yards to the river. Promptly at 0545 the first wave began the crossing.

By 0600, the entire battalion was on the east side of the Saar and the Germans had not been aroused. The battalion reorganized and then began its move down the east bank of the Saar in a column of companies with Company B in the lead. Much of the route was over open terrain which the enemy could cover with automatic weapons, mortars and artillery, but the Germans had been misled by their firm belief that the Americans do not attack at night and their outpost positions and observation posts were not occupied. At about 0700, the 1st Battalion column encountered a group of Germans on their way to occupy these outpost positions, but they were too late; all were taken prisoner and sent quietly to the rear. Another group of Germans passed near the route of the 1st Battalion, but they could not have been captured without a fire-fight and the consequent alerting of the German defenses. The battalion column was halted in silence while they passed. About 50 yards from the bridge, three Germans were found in a scout car equipped with radio. Two surrendered immediately; the third attempted to flash a warning and was bayoneted. At 0715 the leading elements reached the bridge and by 0721 security had been placed around the northern approaches. At this time, the first shots of the operation were fired when some Germans, unaware of what had happened, tried to cross the bridge from the Saarlautern side. They were called on to halt but attempted to escape; both were killed by fire from Colonel Philbin and the group with him.

Immediately, all wires leading to the bridge were cut in order to frustrate German demolition efforts, and the attached engineer platoon led by Lt. Edward Herbert began to check the area for mines. In the middle of the bridge were four 500-pound aerial bombs laid end to end. These had not been fused, and it appears that they were originally intended merely to contribute to the destruction when the main demolitions were set off. However, shortly after the bridge had been seized, the Germans sent two groups onto the apparent mission of fusing and detonating these bombs, but all were killed by small arms and machine gun fire.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion was engaged in the equally important operation of seizing the south end of the bridge. At 2230, the Company L commander left the 3rd Battalion command post at Felsberg^o and went to the company command post in Unter-Felsberg,^o where he issued his orders. After summarizing the enemy and friendly situation, he continued:

It is the mission of Company L to attack at 0745 December 3 with the purpose of securing the southeastern end of the bridge across the Saar River at Deutsche Strasse in Saarlautern before it can be destroyed by the enemy. To accomplish this mission the main strength of the enemy remaining in Saarlautern will be bypassed. The company will attack from a line of departure which will be the street running in front of the military barracks in the southwestern edge of Saarlautern. . . .

As soon as the southeastern end of the bridge is secure, we must clear the bypassed enemy resistance in our zone and establish contact with the 1st and 2nd battalions as soon as possible. The 2nd Battalion will continue its attack to clear the city of Saarlautern.

We will attack with two platoons abreast, the 3rd platoon on the right, which will seize the near or southeastern side of the bridge entrance, and the 2nd platoon on the left, which will cross the entrance to the bridge and defend the northeast or far edge of the bridge entrance. The 1st platoon will be in support less one squad, which will remain at the line of departure to protect the 155-millimeter self-propelled gun. The squad of engineers will go with the support platoon and will be ready to assist the company when needed for demolitions. The ammunition and pioneer squad is attached to the engineers and will have the same mission.

The tank destroyers will stay near the line of departure until called for by the company commander. The self-propelled gun will remain at the line of departure; it will take up the best pos-

sible concealed position and will be ready to fire on targets of opportunity. The three mortar sections of the weapons platoon are attached, one to each rifle platoon, as bazooka ammunition carriers. Sergeant Vitulski's light machine gun section will be attached to the 3rd platoon.

Company headquarters will follow the 2nd platoon, and the support platoon will follow company headquarters.

The company aid men will be with the platoons, and the litter team will remain with company headquarters until needed. We shall have one radio with the company, one with the tank destroyers and one with the self-propelled gun. No wire will be carried. I will follow the 2nd platoon.

Company L left Unter-Felsberg^o at 0400 and at 0545 had reached the command post of the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry. The 2nd Battalion had earlier cleared the street as far as the line of departure, but since the battalion had pulled back at dark, it was possible that the Germans had reoccupied some houses. Consequently, the commanding officer and the 2nd platoon of Company L made a brief reconnaissance to make sure the area was clear; no opposition was found.

Company L attacked at 0745. The 2nd platoon passed to the left of a large hospital just ahead of the line of departure and met no initial opposition. It then moved across Graf Werder Strasse and around a slaughter house. Here the platoon encountered a woven wire obstacle too high to climb, and at the same time came under German small arms fire. Part of the platoon took up the fire-fight, while the remainder cut a path through the wire obstacle. Meanwhile, the 3rd platoon had come up behind the 2nd platoon and was able to relieve the pressure on them. The 3rd platoon, moving to the right of the hospital, met no opposition in its advance. Some Germans had attempted to surrender, but they were waved back since speed was more important than prisoners in the Company L operation.

The 2nd platoon continued aggressively, and its 2nd squad crossed the entrance to the bridge. Shortly afterwards, four men came out of a bunker at the northeast corner of the bridge; all four were killed and the empty bunker was occupied. The remainder of the 2nd platoon then crossed over to its side of the bridge entrance, and the 3rd platoon moved to its positions on the southwest side. These platoons then covered the approach of the support platoon and of the attached elements.

The company reorganized and prepared for the inevitable counter-attack. The company commander radioed the tank destroyers to come to the bridge, and when they did not appear he relayed the mes-

sage through the 2nd Battalion command post. It was discovered that the tank destroyers had started for the bridge, but that they had held up because of the large amount of small arms fire coming from the Germans who had been bypassed in Company L's rapid advance; the tank destroyer leaders argued that where there were small arms there were probably also bazookas. The battalion S-2 ordered the tank destroyers to proceed despite this danger in view of the extraordinary importance of the bridge, not only to the Division but to Corps as well. At this point, Lieutenant Eldridge appeared with one of his men, and the two of them escorted the tank destroyers to the bridge. By 0830 visual contact had been made with the 1st Battalion north of the bridge, and by 0845 Company L was organized for defense.

The Germans had been caught completely by surprise in the Division's seizure of the bridge, and they were slow to react effectively. Before 0900, two small counterattacks, each of slightly less than platoon strength, were directed against the 1st Battalion, but both were easily repulsed. During the remainder of the day, the 1st Battalion cleared out the woods and buildings, including two pillboxes, in the vicinity of the bridge. After the first counterattacks had been repulsed, the Germans began to place all types of artillery on the bridge area, with calibers ranging up to 240-millimeter and in amounts which made the shelling as heavy, perhaps, as any fired by the Germans during the war.

Meanwhile Company L of the 3rd Battalion, at the other end of the bridge received counterattacks of greater strength than did the 1st Battalion. At about 0900, the enemy attacked out of the large concrete buildings facing the bridge in approximately company strength. The Germans were met by heavy fire, both from Company L and from the attached tank destroyers; many were wounded or killed, and the rest withdrew to the protection of the buildings from which they had attacked. Lieutenant Eldridge^o took advantage of the German disorganization following their defeat and ordered an attack. This was highly successful, and when it was over Company L was in control of all the buildings immediately south of its bridge position and had also taken all of the immediately adjacent bunkers. Throughout the remainder of the day, the company repelled a number of small attacks by Germans who had been driven toward the bridge by the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry or who were trying to escape Saarlautern by the only route still open. During the entire operation December 3, Company L killed 39 Germans and took 136 prisoners, while suffering only seven casualties (two killed and five wounded).

Meanwhile, every effort was being made to make the captured

bridge available for vehicles. By afternoon, the four aerial bombs had been hauled off the bridge on improvised sleds, and the engineers, having completed their preliminary inspection, declared the bridge safe for traffic. The 1st Battalion supply officer immediately began to move ammunition and supplies across the Saar, and some tank destroyers also crossed. Later, on December 5, when the artillery fire on the bridge had slackened somewhat, the engineers made a more careful examination for demolitions. Eight prepared demolition positions were found, each consisting of a hollow chamber approximately two feet in diameter and 25 feet in depth, built into the piers of the bridge and filled with dynamite and TNT. The entrances to the chambers were camouflaged as man-hole covers in the gutters and were hidden by debris and snow. Altogether, 6,400 pounds of explosives were removed from the bridge at this time. The complete story of the German plan of demolition was never revealed. However, prisoners stated that American artillery had knocked out the generator which would have provided the current for the demolition and that German engineers were on their way to hand-blow the bridge at the time the 1st Battalion captured it.

By the evening of December 3, the 95th Division had secured intact a main bridge across the Saar, and by December 5 it had reduced all enemy resistance west of the river. For the next two weeks, the Division was engaged in two largely distinct operations: The expansion of the bridgehead already gained at Saarlautern and the establishment of a bridgehead to the south at Ensdorf. After a brief account of the reduction of German resistance west of the Saar, the two bridgeheads will be treated separately; first, the expansion of the Saarlautern bridgehead by the 377th and 379th Infantry Regiments through their relief by the 5th Infantry Division December 17 and, second, the seizure and expansion of the Ensdorf bridgehead by the 378th Infantry through its abandonment the night of December 19-20.

THE END OF RESISTANCE WEST OF THE RIVER

On December 3, the 377th Infantry, on the left of the Division sector, finished clearing its zone with the expected lack of serious opposition. Consequently, the day's operations were largely a regrouping of the regimental forces for new missions. The 3rd Battalion remained in Beaumarais.^o The 2nd Battalion sent Company G down the hill from Ober-Limberg^o to Nieder-Limberg^o at 0900, and the town was occupied without incident. Shortly after, the 1st Battalion moved out of St. Barbara^o in a column of companies with Company B leading, followed by Company A and with Company C in reserve. With Company G on its left, the 1st Battalion continued the advance into Wallerfangen;^o the patrol reports of the preceding evening had been correct and no enemy were encountered. Finally, the remainder of the 2nd Battalion pulled out of position through Guisingen,^o and then followed the 1st Battalion through St. Barbara^o into Wallerfangen.^o At 1930 December 3, the 377th Regiment passed to Division reserve and remained in assembly in the vicinity of Wallerfangen.^o

In the meantime, the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry moved east through the city of Saarlautern and by dusk had cleared most of the area of resistance and had set up a defense line on the far edge of the city. The fighting had been of the house-to-house type. Tanks supported the battalion and were used to fire on targets of opportunity and on strongpoints; meanwhile, the infantry moved slowly ahead in individual house fighting. Beginning shortly before dusk, the whole area was subjected to heavy German artillery fire, and this was to be almost continuous during the next days. Contact had been made with the 3rd Battalion at the bridge, and the resistance remaining in the city consisted merely of isolated pockets.

On the Division's right, the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry attacked toward Lisdorf^o at 0800. By noon, it was in the outskirts of the town and began to fight its way forward with Company L on the left and Company K on the right. Before dark, elements of the battalion had pushed down to the river, and it was discovered that the bridges had all been blown. Severe opposition from bypassed Germans forced the battalion to pull back from the river and to plan for

a completion of the Lisdorf^o operation the morning of December 4.

The 1st Battalion, on the right of the 378th zone, pushed out at 1030 from Sablonhof^o and from Sandhof^o and drove forward to a group of houses only a few hundred yards from the Saar. Here the battalion held up until preparations for the crossing could be completed, and during the night of December 3-4 outposted the road running south from Lisdorf.^o

The 2nd Battalion, in regimental reserve, remained at Neu-Forweiler,^o with a reinforced company at Bisten^o to protect the regimental and divisional flank. Here the 5th Division was continuing its advance, but its front remained some distance behind the 95th Division front, and the possibility of a flank attack was still open. At 1415 December 3, for example, the 5th Division reported that there were 600 enemy moving on the road from Friederichweiler to Ueberherrn (about a mile from Bisten^o and about four miles behind the forward elements of the 1st Battalion). Division Artillery prepared to fire on these troops, and the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry was alerted to defend against them. The report finally proved erroneous, but it nevertheless illustrates the renewed problem of the exposed flank.

On December 4, the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry completed mopping-up operations in Saarlautern and prepared to be relieved by the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry. At the same time, the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry continued mopping up in Lisdorf and by 1700 the town was completely cleared. The 1st Battalion 378th Infantry remained in the same position near the Saar, and the 2nd Battalion continued as regimental reserve. The 95th Division zone had been cleared to the Saar.

THE EXPANSION OF THE FRAULAUTERN BRIDGEHEAD

December 3-17

By the evening of December 3, the 1st Battalion 379th Infantry had set up a semi-circular defense around the German end of the captured bridge, and the 3rd Battalion was defending the Saarlautern end of the bridge. At this time, Colonel Bacon^o ordered the 1st Battalion to continue mopping-up operations in its present location and to prepare for the passage of the 3rd Battalion through its lines. The 3rd Battalion was ordered to attack through the 1st Battalion at 0700 December 4 to capture the first four blocks on the eastern edge of Fraulautern, being prepared to continue the attack through the remainder of the town on order. The 2nd Battalion was to continue its mopping-up operations in Saarlautern and to defend the southern end of the captured bridge with a reinforced rifle company.

At dawn on December 4, the 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry crossed the Saar over the captured bridge and moved out from its line of departure against Fraulautern at 0710. The attack was made with two companies abreast, Company I on the left and Company K on the right, with Company L in reserve. Resistance was severe, and during the morning the battalion was involved in the large-scale counterattack directed primarily against the 1st Battalion and the bridge. By evening, three pillboxes had been taken, and the leading companies had taken up positions a block inside Fraulautern. During the attack, Companies I and K, with the attached platoons of Company M, had no communication with battalion headquarters. Only at 2100 was contact established, and at midnight Company L moved forward to join Companies I and K.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion had maintained its position against a series of fierce counterattacks. Shortly after 1000 December 4, a force estimated at two companies of infantry plus five tanks attacked out of the Saarlautern-Roden area. Two of the tanks were knocked out, one by tank destroyers and the other by bazooka; the three remaining tanks withdrew. Toward dusk two platoons infiltrated

through the woods south of Company A, and the attack was supported by heavy artillery concentrations. The enemy were forced to hold up at the edge of the woods and later withdrew. At 1745 the following radio message was sent from regimental headquarters to the 1st Battalion: "Expect counterattack tonight. Hold bridgehead at all cost." Shortly before midnight, the expected attack developed when the Germans attempted to destroy the bridge by sending against it a tank loaded with demolitions. The tank, supported by infantry, succeeded in advancing past the first houses held by Company A, but it was knocked out by point-blank tank destroyer fire. The tank burned for hours, lighting up the whole bridgehead area. Throughout the night, the enemy was active and the 1st Battalion was harassed by combat patrols.

Meanwhile, efforts were being made to strengthen the bridgehead by preparing to send additional troops across. This was made easier by a change in Division boundary ordered by the XX Corps. Effective at 1200 December 4, the 90th Division was to take over all the territory north of Wallerfangen,^o and by 1500 December 4 the 358th Infantry of the 90th Division had relieved the 377th Infantry in this territory. The morning of December 4, General Twaddle^o ordered Colonel Gaillard^o to make a reconnaissance of Saarlautern and to prepare to move one battalion there for the purpose of relieving the 379th Infantry. Once the 379th Infantry had cleared, the entire 377th Infantry would move into Saarlautern and would be committed as needed to carry on the attack east of the Saar. In the early afternoon of December 4, General Twaddle^o directed that the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry cross the Saar before dark. Continuous artillery concentrations on the bridge area made this impossible, particularly since there was no shelter available across the Saar, and plans were made to have the 2nd Battalion cross before dawn the next day and attack north through the 1st Battalion against Saarlautern-Roden.^o

On December 5, the 1st Battalion remained in position at the bridge for the third day. It continued to clean up the area, and the process had to be frequently repeated to garner in the Germans who had infiltrated during the series of counterattacks. Company A, for example, took 55 prisoners in the woods and buildings of their area. The 2nd Battalion cleared the bridge at 0700, passed through the 1st Battalion positions and jumped off in the attack against Saarlautern-Roden at 0730. A heavy artillery concentration preceded the attack. By 0900 the 2nd Battalion had reached the outskirts of the town and had beaten off a small counterattack supported by armor. A mutually supporting group of pillboxes held up their advance, but by the



Not all the Germans who opposed the Division came advertised as "Supermen". Here are two samples of aged Volksturm troops captured at Saarlautern.

middle of the afternoon three of these had been taken. One was forced to surrender after flame-throwers had been used and after a tank destroyer had scored several direct hits on it. The other two gave up when their situation was explained to them by a German officer captured in the first pillbox. The prisoners declared they had been out of contact with higher headquarters for three days and that after retreating across the Saar they had occupied the first pillboxes they found. Elements of Company E advanced further toward Saarlautern-Roden proper, but they met heavy resistance and were forced to hold up and wait reinforcements. Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion had jumped off at 0730 in the attack with the first four blocks of Fraulautern as its initial objective. Despite heavy opposition, these had been cleared by 1400. Colonel Bacon^o ordered the attack continued to clear the town eastward as far as the railroad, and by evening the battalion had made some progress toward this new objective.

In the evening of December 5, Corps modified the 95th Division mission. It was no longer to be prepared to uncover Rehlingen^o for the crossing of the 90th Division but would continue forward with the main effort to the northeast. The morning of December 6th, the 90th Division sent four assault battalions across the Saar against moderate resistance, and plans were being made to effect a junction with the 95th Division bridgehead.

Meanwhile, the 377th Infantry had been moving toward the bridge and was preparing to take part in the expansion of the bridgehead. The 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry had moved into position to the south end of the bridge at 1930 December 4, effecting informal relief of the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry. By noon of December 5, the entire regiment, with the exception of supporting weapons, had moved to Saarlautern. The Antitank Company, the Cannon Company and the attached Company A of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion remained in position along the west bank of the Saar to support the 379th Infantry. Preparations were made to have the 3rd Battalion relieve the 1st Battalion 379th Infantry east of the Saar, and the relief was completed by 0500 December 6.

On December 6, the 379th Infantry continued its slow expansion of the Saarlautern bridgehead. On the left the 2nd Battalion was counterattacked at 0730 with a small force. The attack was repulsed and the advance resumed. At 0930 Company E captured a pillbox containing 32 Germans. As would happen again and again in the bridgehead fighting, the reduction of one pillbox merely meant the uncovering of another one, and the battalion was embroiled throughout the day on the southern outskirts of Saarlautern-Roden. The 1st Battalion, which had been relieved of its bridge defense mission



The ruins of Saarlautern: Above: The city's railroad depot.
Below: A factory.

by the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry, attacked at dawn between the 2nd and 3rd battalions 379th Infantry with the mission of cleaning out its assigned zone in Saarlautern-Roden. The advance was slow, and the battalion was forced to clean up not only pillboxes but houses which had been made into virtual forts by the construction of reinforced cellars and with walls reinforced up to the third story. Toward evening, the battalion had worked its way forward to the vicinity of a large warehouse, but the building was heavily defended and it proved impossible to capture it that day. The 3rd Battalion continued its slow advance into Fraulautern. Twice during the morning the Germans directed counterattacks against it, at 0700 and at 0900; Company K bore the brunt of each attack and both were successfully repulsed. At the end of the day, another block of Fraulautern had been cleared. The battalion was given orders the evening of December 6 to hold in its present position until the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry should pass through it the morning of December 7; the 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry would then revert to regimental reserve. During the day the amount of artillery falling in the bridgehead area decreased somewhat during the early afternoon, and it was believed that the Germans were directing their fire primarily against the 90th Division. However, by dusk the artillery was again normal.

By December 6, the 95th Division had the entire 379th Infantry fighting in the Saarlautern bridgehead, and the 377th Infantry was prepared to join in the attack December 7. During the afternoon of December 6, Division accordingly issued Operations Instructions No. 13, which indicated the zones and objectives of these two regiments as well as of the 378th Infantry Regiment, which had established a bridgehead at Ens Dorf^o December 5. On the Division left, the 379th Infantry had Saarlautern-Roden as initial objective, in the center the 377th Infantry had Fraulautern and on the right the 378th Infantry had Ens Dorf.^o In addition, all the regiments were given final objectives, and these were grouped on the high ground which forms a semicircle around the initial objectives.

The basic pattern set up during the first days of fighting in Saarlautern-Roden and in Fraulautern would persist during the period from December 6, when Operations Instructions No. 13 was issued, to December 17, when the 95th Division was relieved in this sector by the 5th Division. Progress would be slow, and at no time would Division troops be able to break through the crust of German resistance and move rapidly ahead. Not only was the fighting during this period characterized by slow progress against stubborn and persistent resistance, but the action tended more and more to reduce to a series

of small operations for specific objectives. Rarely were there actions in which it could be said that a regiment or even a battalion was the real fighting unit; regiment and battalion were "attacking in zone," but the real objectives were blocks and pillboxes and houses and they were being attacked by companies, platoons and squads. Consequently, a detailed history of the action would necessarily be of great length, and a summary of the daily Division progress reduces to a barren repetition of the statement that the Nth Battalion captured two pillboxes or a block or part of a block against stubborn resistance. Nevertheless, since there was little difference between the fighting in one part of the Division front and another, the capture of one pillbox or of one block can illustrate what was taking place all along the line and day after day. Consequently, before considering the bridgehead operation as a whole, the general techniques employed against pillboxes and against houses will be described and illustrated.

The following tactics for the reduction of pillboxes are those worked out in the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry and described by the battalion commander, Lt. Col. John E. Kelly,^o but the same techniques, with variations in detail, were applied all along the Division front.

It will be remembered that there were two main types of machine gun pillboxes. In the first place, there was the embrasure type, where fire was delivered from one or more openings in the walls, and the cupola type, which had only the turret exposed, the rest of the structure being covered with dirt. The latter was the stronger. The concrete embrasure-type pillbox could usually be reduced or forced to surrender by heavy direct fire weapons, but in the case of the cupola-type, artillery alone was rarely sufficient. In one case at Ens Dorf,^o for example, a steel cupola withstood five direct hits from a 155-millimeter "Long Tom" at less than 1,000 yards as well as 50 rounds of 90-millimeter tank destroyer fire. Even eight inch howitzers failed to produce certain results against these pillboxes.

The Germans attempted to defend the pillboxes from the outside, and riflemen occupied trenches surrounding them in the immediate vicinity. These guards could usually be driven away with artillery concentrations. In general, the area of approach to the pillbox was not mined, but in some cases a path would have to be blown with bangalore torpedoes. Once the guards had been driven inside, the Germans would call down their own artillery on the pillbox; this fire could be dispersed by feinting attacks against other pillboxes at the same time. The more important defensive fires would come from supporting and adjacent pillboxes, and the neutralization of this fire was a primary problem in the reduction of a pillbox. All avail-



The ruins of Saarlautern: Above: Hitler Platz.
Below: A residential street.



German snipers were hidden in this house east of the Saar. Three surrendered after this white phosphorous shell burst.

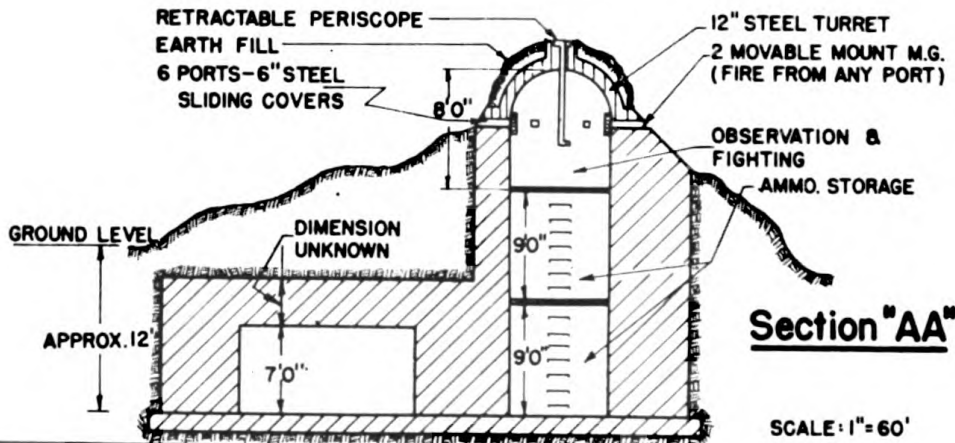
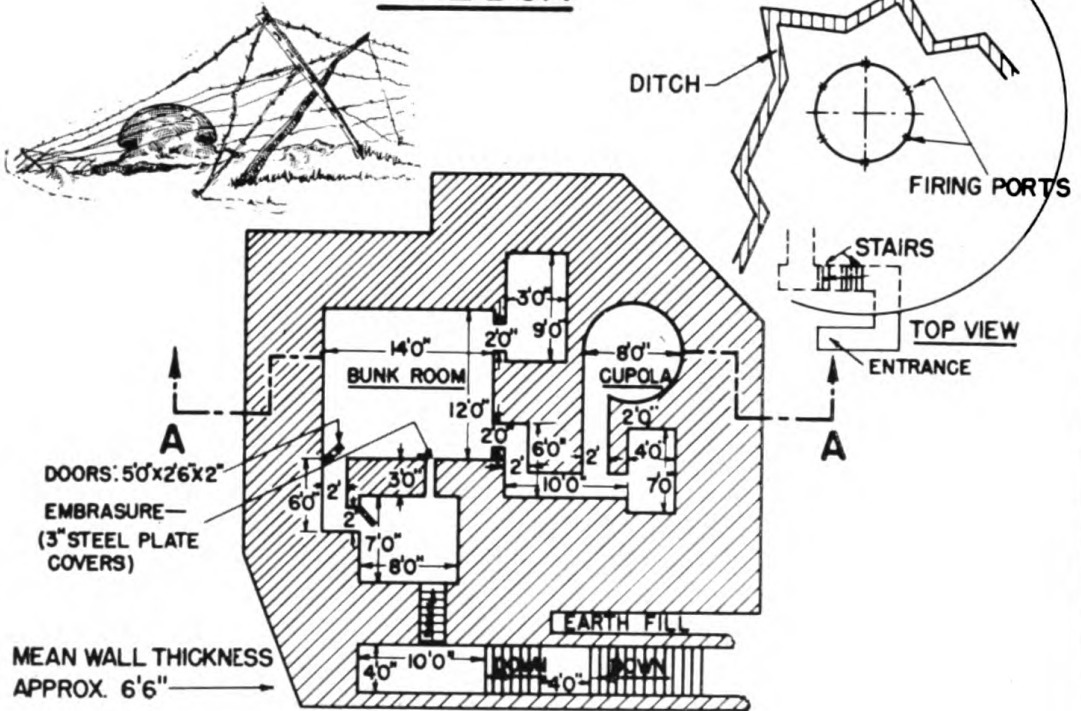
able weapons would be directed against the near-by bunkers; particularly good results could be obtained from the use of heavy artillery, since the eight-inch howitzers and the 240-millimeter howitzers would nearly always force the occupants of supporting pillboxes out of the firing chambers and into temporary refuge in the bottom of the shelters.

By these means, the pillbox could be weakened and in part isolated, and there remained the actual reduction by assault, although in some cases the preliminary measures, supported by direct-fire weapons and by public address systems, were sufficient to bring about surrender. Three groups were involved in the final reduction of the pillbox: the assault group, the support and security group and the demolition crew. In each case the minimum number was used. A typical assault team might include three riflemen (with white phosphorus and fragmentation grenades), a bazooka team, two rifle grenadiers, a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) team and two engineers (with satchel, pole or beehive charges). The support and security group was strong enough to protect the operation against small counterattacks and other developments. Finally, the demolition crew was large enough to carry the explosives necessary to destroy the captured pillbox.

In the actual assault on the bunker, after enemy supporting fires had been neutralized primary importance was attached to compelling the occupants to close their embrasure or "button up." Initially, this would be effected by the fire of the support and security group; when its fire was masked by the assault group, the latter would take up the mission. When the assault team had worked in close enough, the engineer with the charge gave the signal, fire was lifted and the charge emplaced. Both beehive and satchel charges were used according to the circumstances; if possible, they were emplaced against the embrasures but on occasion they were also used to blow in the door. Once the hole had been blown, fragmentation and smoke grenades were thrown through the breach, and in most cases the dazed occupants of the pillbox would surrender at this point. In some cases, however, it was necessary to enter the pillbox and clear it room by room. Once captured, there were various methods of destroying a pillbox, but the most certain was to blow it with approximately 1,000 pounds of TNT or somewhat less of Composition C.

The general techniques just described may be illustrated by the actual reduction of a pillbox by the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry in early January. At this time the 3rd Battalion was holding the right flank of the Saarlautern bridgehead area, and it was being hampered in its operations by pillbox No. 337. The decision was accordingly made to reduce the pillbox. The pillbox was situated several hundred

OBSERVATION TYPE PILL-BOX



95 DIV. G-2 MEMO. "SIGFRIED LINE FORTIFICATIONS"
DRAWING BY 320 ENGR. BN.

yards from the Saar and between it and the river the enemy still held a row of houses (Row A) as well as a series of pillboxes. As the first step in the neutralization of the supporting fires, the row of houses was attacked and occupied against scattered resistance. In this way, the enemy lost the houses as firing positions, and from the houses the Americans could direct fire against the rear of the river pillboxes. The night before the assault, the houses directly northwest of the pillbox were occupied in order that the attack might jump off from a position as close to the pillbox as possible.

The fire plan for the neutralization of German supporting positions called for light and medium artillery before the assault to drive to cover all Germans in fire trenches. The artillery continued to maintain harassing fire on trenches in the area during the assault, and the largest pillbox on the ridge to the north was taken under fire by an eight-inch howitzer. Riflemen and machine gunners in the buildings northwest of the objective fired on known and suspected enemy locations to the south and east, while additional riflemen and machine gunners in the row of houses along the river bank fired on houses and pillboxes to the north and east. Finally, a platoon of tank destroyers placed direct fire on the pillboxes to the south and east of the objective. Meanwhile, the entire area was blanketed with smoke. It had been originally planned to lay down this screen with smoke pots, but wind conditions made this impossible and 81-millimeter mortars and artillery were used.

Just before the assault, a 90-millimeter tank destroyer fired five rounds on the pillbox, and an appeal to the occupants to surrender was made with a public address system. No reply was made, and the assault team moved forward. The beehive charge was emplaced by the engineer under the cover of supporting fire. However, the charge did not explode, and the engineer was killed by a chance round. A second assault team had been provided against such a contingency, and it attacked the pillbox, set the charge and blew a hole in the embrasure. After the explosion the team returned, threw grenades into the opening and sprayed it with automatic weapons. The public address system was again used and this time with good success. Nine Germans surrendered, seven Germans being found dead within the pillbox. Immediately, the demolition crew entered the bunker and placed their charges. For a time the crew was delayed by the mortar and artillery fire the Germans were placing on the bunker, but soon it was able to infiltrate back to the jump-off point. The charge was set off and Pillbox 337 was a mass of rubble.

The capture of Pillbox 337 was generally typical of the techniques used. However, it must be remembered that it was one of the larger

and stronger ones, and that its capture was consequently a more serious operation than in many other cases. Also, it should be noted that the pillbox was in the open. Those pillboxes which were located in the cities could in most cases be approached more easily after the adjacent houses had been neutralized. A smaller assault and support group was used, and it was not necessary to set up the elaborate supporting fires which were used in this case.

In house-to-house fighting, the essential technique was that of "mouse-holing". The streets and yards were far too well covered by German riflemen and machine gunners to make possible an advance in the open. Consequently, once Division troops had gained entrance to one house in a row, they would blow a hole into the next house with a beehive charge or with some other explosive. In a typical case, two riflemen and a BAR man would then enter through the hole and clear the first room. As they moved on through the house, the remainder of the squad or of the platoon would also enter, and when one house had been completely secured, the process would be repeated for the next. In this way, troops could occupy a whole row of houses without exposing themselves, and it was possible to bypass and eventually surround pillboxes which could not be taken frontally. A problem of particular difficulty, in view of the depleted strength of the infantry battalions, was the prevention of enemy infiltration back into houses which had been cleared. There were not enough men to occupy all the houses, and it was impossible to prevent some Germans from sneaking through the lines at night. Consequently, it proved necessary again and again for units to clean out areas for a second and a third time.

An operation of Company G 377th Infantry in Fraulautern in the period from December 6 through December 10 serves as an illustration of house-to-house fighting, complicated, as was often the case, by pillbox reduction.

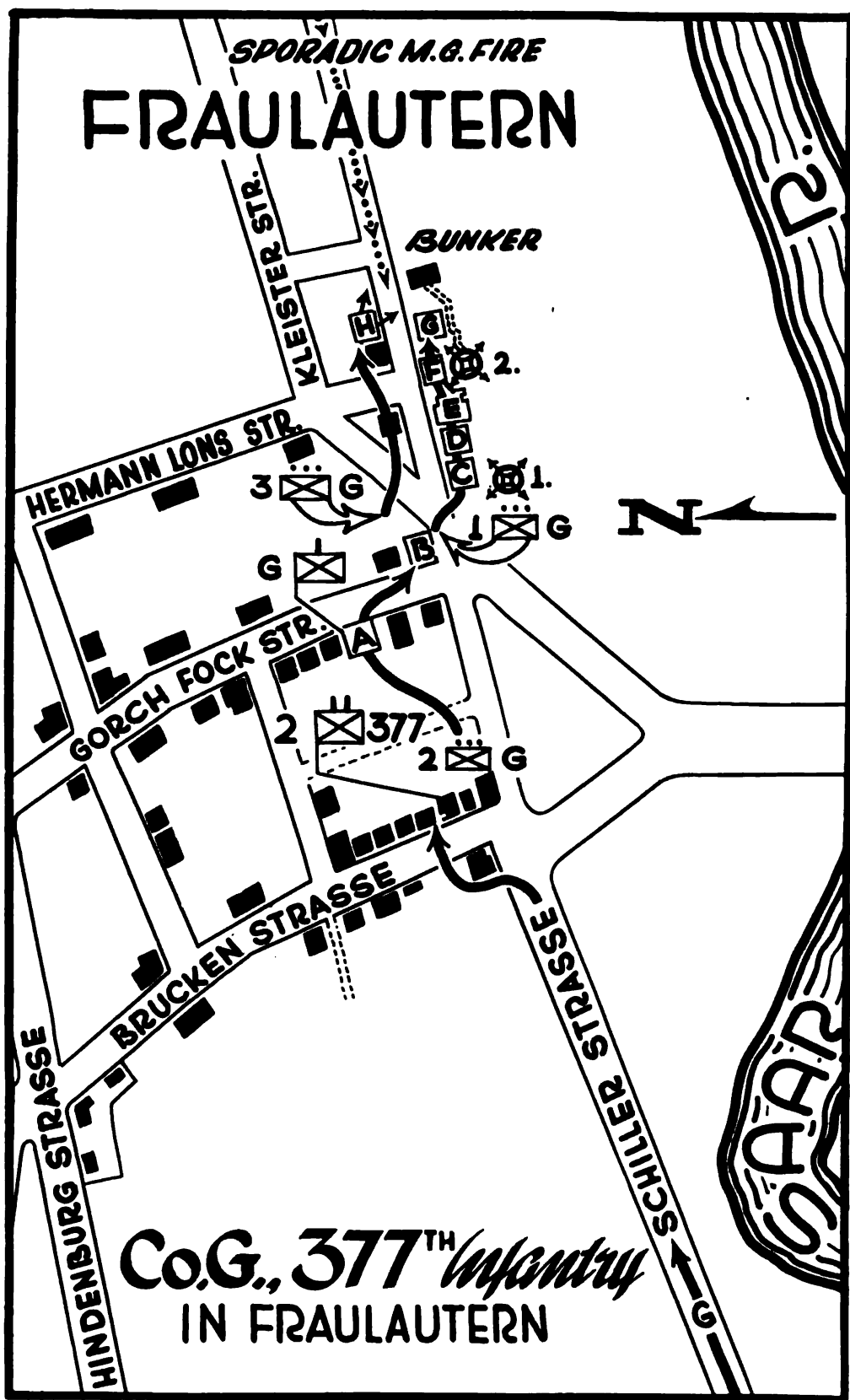
Company G, under the command of Capt. Herbert H. Hardy,^o moved out of Saarlautern the evening of December 6 and crossed the captured bridge during a lull in the artillery. When the company came to the triple road fork, it turned right and followed the road along the river. The Germans had the road under fire a good deal of the time, but that night they were overshooting the mark and most of the rounds fell in the Saar. Guides met the company in Fraulautern and took its troops to houses in the blocks which had been captured during the days before by Company K of the 379th Infantry. Some of the company were billeted in the Brucken Strasse (the first street left off the river road) and some in the near side of the next street (Gorch-Fock Strasse). Artillery fire had been consistent and

heavy in the area, and few of the houses were little better than ruins; men regarded themselves as fortunate if their houses didn't have shell holes through to the cellar.

In the Fraulautern house-to-house fighting, there was little spread even to a unit as large as a battalion. The 2nd Battalion command post was in Brucken Strasse, the Company G command post was in the next street (House A) and the company objectives were just around the corner. During the night, company commanders went to battalion headquarters for their orders, and later platoon leaders and platoon sergeants went to the company command post to receive theirs. Company G had as its mission the clearing out of the Schillerstrasse, the street which was a continuation of the river road. The 3rd platoon was to clear the houses on the left side of the street, away from the river, and the 2nd platoon was to clear the houses on the river side as well as the two pillboxes and the personnel bunker between these houses and the river. The attack was to jump off shortly after dawn on December 7.

The 3rd platoon, working on the left side of the street, found all the houses unoccupied and advanced rapidly to the house diagonally opposite the bunker. Here they held up, and members of the attached machine gun sections of Company H emplaced their weapons to cover the bunker area. As happened frequently, the Germans were unaware of the nearness of American troops, and three enemy were shot down as they were talking and laughing outside the bunker.

Meanwhile, the 2nd platoon first made the move, individually and at a run, to the house (B), on the far side of Gorch-Fock Strasse, which was to be the jumping off point. From here the 1st squad, the initial assault team, dashed across the Schillerstrasse into the yard of the first house (C) in the row which was the platoon objective. A German machine gun which commanded Schillerstrasse opened fire as the squad crossed the road but there were no casualties. The house (C) had a shell hole in its side which opened both on the basement and on the first floor, and the members of the assault team ran across the yard and hurled themselves through the upper part of the opening into the first floor. All made it successfully except the last man; he was hit in the stomach by rifle fire from the cellar, fell back outside the house and was dead before litterbearers could get him to the medics. Once inside the house, the 1st squad began to clean it out. No Germans were found except in the basement, and a grenade thrown down the cellar stairs persuaded them to surrender. Six gave themselves up, but four others who had been in the cellar made their escape to the next house (D) during the attack. Captain Hardy,^o with Lieutenant Goodyear^o and the 3rd squad, came over to



assist the 1st squad when they heard the grenade, and shortly afterwards the entire platoon joined them. During all this time, there was no sign of activity from Pillbox No. 1, though the operation had come within its field of fire, and it was evidently unoccupied.

The original assault team, the 1st squad, remained as security in the house it had captured (C), and the remainder of the platoon continued the attack. The next house (D) also had a shell hole in the side, and one by one the men ran across the open space and threw themselves through the hole. No immediate opposition was encountered, but the house was a duplex with no inside communication between the two parts. However, a pick was found and a hole was chopped through the wall. By this time the Germans had left the far side of the house also, and preparations were made to move on. The 1st squad, left behind as security, now moved up and joined the platoon. One man was wounded by fire from Pillbox No. 2, now in a position to take under fire from the rear all the houses in which the 2nd platoon was operating.

One more house (E) was occupied; it was gutted by artillery and fire, but no opposition was met. The next house (F) was a more difficult problem. The side wall was intact, and there was only a second story window. However, the driveway by the side of the house was screened from the fire of Pillbox No. 2 by a barn to the rear and by a stone wall behind the house. Accordingly, Captain Hardy^o and another man tried to chop a hole in the side of the house with the pick. Germans dropped concussion grenades out of the second story window, and it proved necessary to stop the chopping and wait until evening for demolitions to blow an entrance. The charge blew an entrance, but at the same time it set the house on fire. Throughout the night the fire burned brightly, making it necessary to post extra guards, and there were many minor explosions as the fire set off small arms ammunition stored in the burning house.

During the night of December 7-8, the 3rd platoon remained in the house across the street which it had reached early in the morning, and the 2nd platoon holed up in the last house it had taken (E). The 2nd platoon building was too badly damaged to be blacked out, and neither fire nor light was possible. Meanwhile, the 1st platoon had moved up from the company command post across the Gorch-Fock Strasse and then across the Schillerstrasse to the first building (C) taken in the day's fighting. Here, too, the almost complete destruction of the building made fire and lights impossible.

The next day, December 8, the 3rd platoon was given the mission of attacking through the burning building (F) to the last building in the row (G), which was to be the jump off point for the attack on

Pillbox No. 2 and the bunker. One by one, the men made the dash across Schillerstrasse into one of the houses (D) the 2nd platoon had cleared the day before; all drew fire, but all escaped injury. They moved up to the building next to the burning building, but the heat was so intense that it was necessary to hold up most of the day waiting for it to cool. In the meantime, steady bazooka fire was directed against Pillbox No. 2 from the barn in the rear of the building (E). At first the guns in the pillbox were moved one way and another to cover noises and firing in the barn, but eventually all visible activity in the pillbox ceased; the bazookas had apparently driven the Germans out of the firing chamber into the underground shelter.

Finally, it was possible to make the move through the burned house to the next one (G). The move was made on the run, and the heat, especially from the still burning coal pile in the cellar, was terrific. The body of a German, killed by the concussion from the charge which blew the wall, lay scorched in the passageway. From the burned house there was 15 yards of rubble-covered open space in the direct fire of the pillbox, but the only fire received in crossing it came from further up the street; the bazookas had successfully put a temporary stop to the firing from the pillbox. The last house (G) was clear of enemy, and the 3rd platoon moved into it.

Artillery was heavy that night of December 8-9, and telephone lines were frequently torn up. In addition, a German tank moved up Schillerstrasse behind a roadblock and fired intermittently at the Company G buildings. Some Germans were seen coming up the street toward the bunker, and the 3rd platoon fired on them from the last building (G). The Germans replied by placing machine gun fire on the building.

On December 9 the 3rd platoon remained in position while a self-propelled 155-millimeter gun, from the vicinity of the Brucken Strasse, tried unsuccessfully to reduce the pillbox. The small turret was a difficult target, and it absorbed a number of hits without showing noticeable damage. Accordingly, the mission was given back to the infantry and engineers, and plans were made to undertake the mission that night. An engineer squad brought up 150 pounds of dynamite and TNT. Five members of the 3rd squad, 3rd platoon, and three engineers took 80 pounds of it and worked their way out to a trench which ran from the bunker to the pillbox. Following the trench, they reached a cement stairway leading down to an entrance to the pillbox. Silently they groped their way down the stairway to the door, partly covered with water and rubbish at the bottom. The mutter of German voices could be heard through the door as the charge was set. Fixing the fuse for three minutes, the men rushed

back to their house (G). As the last man reached shelter, the explosion went off; the sod-covered corrugated steel roof over the stairway was blown 20 feet and two bicycles near the top of the stairway were thrown through the air. Two hours later an attempt was made to assess the damage, but the fumes from the explosion were still too thick. Shortly after midnight, the men returned and were able to see that the steel door had been twisted open by the force of the charge. In the room beyond, two dead Germans were floating in the water now two feet deep; another fatally injured by the concussion was propped against a wall but still moaning. No more opposition was received from Pillbox No. 2.

At about the same time, reconnaissance was being made to discover the best approach to the bunker. This completed, the 2nd squad of the 3rd platoon set out to assault it, approaching by way of the trench. The squad was fired on by the guard, but its own weapons, mud-clogged from the trench, would not work and it was forced to return. At approximately 0200, Lieutenant Skala,^o of the regimental IPW (Interrogation of Prisoners of War) team and his French co-worker crawled out to the bunker in an effort to talk the occupants into surrender. The sentry was persuaded to admit them, and once inside they soon convinced the five Germans of the bunker that surrender was the wisest course. The 3rd platoon followed them up and searched the bunker, which was found to contain bunks for 25 men. The platoon remained there for the night, and in the morning the 1st platoon, which had been in reserve in the Schillerstrasse operation, passed through in the attack. Company G had captured and cleaned out its block, and now there was another block; the whole weary and costly round of houses and mouse-holing, pillboxes and demolitions, would begin again.

These were the tactics of house-to-house fighting and pillbox reduction in Saarlautern-Roden and in Fraulautern, and it is this type of difficult and costly action which must be read into the general summaries stating that a particular battalion advanced slightly against stubborn opposition. The advance of the 379th Infantry in Saarlautern-Roden from December 7 through its relief by the 5th Division December 17 will be given first, and the account of the 377th Infantry in Fraulautern during the same period will be given separately.

On December 7, the 2nd Battalion continued the attack into Saarlautern-Roden on the left of the regimental front. It jumped off at 0730 and was hit shortly afterwards by a counterattack which was repulsed with the aid of artillery; it was estimated that somewhat less than a platoon participated, and tank motors could be heard warming up though no tanks were actually seen. In addition, the

battalion had trouble with Germans who had infiltrated through the lines during the night, and it was necessary to round up a number of these during the morning. Shortly before noon, the Germans again counterattacked with a force estimated at 50 riflemen. This was repulsed and the battalion resumed its slow advance. Particular trouble was caused by a tank located in a tunnel against which it was difficult to bring direct fire. However, by evening, the 2nd Battalion had gained approximately a block.

The 1st Battalion 379th Infantry, in the right of the regimental zone, resumed the attack at daybreak. Its first objective was a factory which the enemy defended stubbornly. By 0900 the battalion had destroyed two 40-millimeter guns and one 75-millimeter antitank gun. In the factory, there was a pillbox as well as a tank which the enemy was using as a mobile pillbox. The factory was finally taken, and the battalion advanced up to the railroad tracks. At 1500 Companies A and B attacked over the railroad tracks against heavy fire of all types. Shortly afterwards, they received a vicious counterattack which caused heavy casualties. The ground was held but the line of communication and supply across the railroad tracks was precarious.

The 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry remained in regimental reserve stationed to the right rear of the 1st Battalion and covering the gap between it and the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry.

On December 8, little progress was made. The battalions remained in the same order and the 2nd Battalion on the left attempted to clean out pillboxes between it and the river and to establish contact more firmly with the 1st Battalion. The 1st Battalion on the right was subjected to a counterattack on its forces across the railroad tracks during the morning. The Germans were estimated at a company in strength and with the support of at least one and probably two tanks. The counterattack was pressed fanatically, and it was estimated that over 100 Germans were killed or wounded before the disorganized remainder withdrew. Later in the day, it was discovered that the enemy had control of the communication routes across the tracks, and it was decided that the companies would have to be withdrawn. The withdrawal was effected during the night of December 8-9 without incident. The 3rd Battalion remained in position as regimental reserve.

On December 9, the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry devoted its efforts primarily to capturing a factory where a large number of German infantry were located. The factory was finally taken after heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy, but artillery fire was so heavy that the battalion was forced to withdraw. Early the next morning

at 0430, the Germans attacked the empty buildings after a heavy artillery preparation and reoccupied them. The 1st Battalion cleaned out the railroad station which had been a German strongpoint and pushed forward about a hundred yards on the right. The 3rd Battalion remained in reserve. Despite the fact that the regimental advance was measured in yards, the regimental operations officer estimated in his report that "14 pillboxes, 31 buildings and 7 vehicles were captured, destroyed or rendered unusable during this period" (0800 December 9 to 0800 December 10). Various methods had been tried for the sealing off of pillboxes which had been taken, including the use of thermite, but none had been completely satisfactory. The night of December 9-10, men from the 320th Engineer Battalion welded shut the doors of several captured pillboxes, and it seemed possible that this would prove the most expeditious method of denying them to the enemy.

On December 10, the vicious and costly fight continued with relatively slight results. The 2nd Battalion had to spend most of the morning cleaning up Germans who had infiltrated during the pre-dawn attack on the factory taken by the battalion the day before and then abandoned. By 1200 the attack was resumed, but little progress was made. At 1530 Companies E and G were counterattacked by a force estimated at platoon strength with heavy small arms and artillery support. The attack was broken up by fire before it reached the 2nd Battalion lines. In the 1st Battalion zone, the enemy launched two counterattacks during the morning, at 0820 and at 0940. It was estimated that the Germans used about 150 infantry and two tanks, and it was 1230 before the 1st Battalion had driven off the attack and reorganized. Further advance was prevented by the pillboxes in the vicinity of the railroad station. Many of these were built within other buildings and were extremely difficult and costly to locate. Once found they seemed almost impervious to direct fire, and one of them received 75 rounds from a 90-millimeter self-propelled gun without apparent damage. The 3rd Battalion continued to protect the gap between the 379th and 377th Infantry Regiments.

On December 11, the 379th Infantry reported that small arms resistance decreased slightly, and that there was a notable decrease in artillery and mortar fire in the regimental area. However, in contrast to the 377th Infantry sector, there was no German withdrawal. The 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry made small gains on the left, the 1st Battalion captured three pillboxes on the right, and the 3rd Battalion, on regimental order moved two companies across the railroad tracks into position on the right of the 1st Battalion.

December 12, the 3rd Battalion, in conjunction with the 1st Bat-



Members of the 320th Engineer Battalion constructing a bridge over the Saar at Saarlautern.

talion, launched an attack at 0645 in order to clear a block past the railroad. Resistance was somewhat lighter and the 3rd Battalion took two bunkers. The 1st Battalion successfully assaulted two bunkers during the day, and during the night of December 12-13 a prisoner returned to a third bunker and persuaded its occupants to surrender. The 2nd Battalion again advanced in the brick factory area in a series of small mopping-up operations. Like the other battalions, it captured two bunkers. During the day, the regiment made considerable use of the heavy artillery, eight-inch howitzers and 240-millimeter howitzers, which had been provided for the reduction of fortified buildings and pillboxes. It was felt that these materially aided the advance, for they both aided in the uncovering of pillboxes concealed within other buildings and had a tremendous demoralizing and shock effect on the enemy.

During the night of December 12-13, the Germans attempted a number of small counterattacks, but all were easily repulsed. At about 0800 December 13, three separate attacks were launched against Companies G, B and L. There appeared to be no coordination between the attacks, and the troops seemed unfamiliar with the terrain as well as inexperienced in infantry tactics. At about this time, other changes were observed in the German opposition at Saarlautern-Roden. It was later discovered that these changes were connected with the gradual withdrawal of the 21st Panzer Division from the 95th Division front. The 21st Division had been hard hit, not only

in the Saarlautern-Roden fighting but also earlier, and it had become necessary to throw a certain number of rear echelon personnel into the front lines as replacements. Then the 21st Division received orders to move from the 95th Division front to the vicinity of Strasbourg^o to the south. Since there was a shortage of troops at this time for the manning of the Siegfried Line, it was necessary for the German division to screen its own withdrawal. As a result, further replacements were taken from the rear echelon units of the 21st Division, clerks, typists, cooks and so forth, and they were formed into "Alarm Companies" named for the officer in command. These "Alarm Companies" were thrown into the line, and a small number of the regular 21st Panzer Division troops left with them. The bulk of the regular infantry as well as the specialists from the "Alarm Companies" were then pulled out when the division withdrew. As a result, for several days, the 95th Division in Saarlautern-Roden was opposed largely by these temporary formations and by other miscellaneous units which could be found in the area. Gradually, the German 719th Division, which had come from Holland during the middle of November to the XX Corps front and which had been fighting against the 90th Division in Dillingen,^o extended its sector to the south and took over Saarlautern as well with the result that the enemy organization improved materially. In connection with the special units formed by the 21st Panzer Division, it is well to note that it was these inexperienced troops and miscellaneous units which were generally used in the counterattacks. Consequently, there was a contrast between the high level of professional soldiering in the defensive and the usually foolhardy inexperience of the counterattacks. The Germans sacrificed a tremendous number of men in these uncoordinated counterattacks, but the results were negligible. All the counterattacks were small (during the first period when the 95th Division held the bridgehead, no more than 200 men were ever used at one time and for the most part less than a hundred were employed), but they were so frequent that the casualties suffered during a single week would have been sufficient to mount a large-scale attack with better chance of success. However, the German policy becomes partly understandable when it is remembered that it was usually the hastily formed miscellaneous units which took part in these counterattacks.

On December 13, after the early counterattacks had been beaten off, the 379th Infantry made somewhat more progress than on the preceding days, although resistance continued to be heavy. During the night, a detachment from the regimental combat scouts with some men from Company C of the 320th Engineer Battalion, and Lieutenant Cohn^o of the Military Intelligence Interpretation Team,

together with one prisoner of war, went to a bunker to the front of the Division lines with the mission of persuading the Germans to surrender. They were successful and also succeeded in capturing a bridge across the tank ditch in that area.

On December 14 and 15, all three battalions advanced slowly against moderate resistance. On December 14, five bunkers were captured and an estimated 155 buildings captured or destroyed; on December 15, three bunkers and an estimated 145 buildings were taken. Finally, on December 16, after two weeks of bitter and costly fighting in the bridgehead, the 379th Infantry was informed that it would be relieved by the 11th Infantry of the 5th Division the night of December 16-17. The relief was begun at 2030 December 16 and had been completed by 0400 the next morning. By the evening of December 17, the regiment had closed in to an assembly area in the vicinity of Teterchen.

Meanwhile, the 377th Infantry had been fighting since December 7 in Fraulautern against much the same sort of opposition as had been encountered by the 379th Infantry in Saarlautern-Roden. The 2nd Battalion crossed over the bridge from Saarlautern the night of December 6-7 and jumped off in the attack (through positions taken by the 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry) the morning of December 7, while the 1st Battalion remained on the west side of the river and while the 3rd Battalion remained in position on the east side of the river protecting the captured bridge. By evening, the 2nd Battalion had secured positions in the first three blocks of Fraulautern and were prepared to continue the attack. On December 8 the German resistance stiffened and the battalion was unable to make appreciable progress. In contrast to Saarlautern-Roden, the Germans mounted few counterattacks in Fraulautern, although small groups would drive back into houses the 377th Infantry had just taken. On December 8, for example, seven Germans charged a building occupied by men of Company E. The two guards at the door were overpowered and sent back by the Germans as prisoners. The remainder of the platoon which had occupied the house was trapped in the cellar, but the Germans made no attempt to clean them out. Instead, they set up a machine gun in the kitchen and directed fire against another Company E building; meanwhile, they tried to bring up reinforcements but were unsuccessful. Finally, two of the men trapped in the cellar managed to drive the Germans out of the house with grenades and as the Germans fled they were picked off by rifle fire from those still in the basement.

On December 9, the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry, minus Company C, which was left in place to guard the Saarlautern end of the bridge,



A medium tank attached to the Division blasts an enemy-held building in Saarlautern-Roden.

moved across the river and attacked to the left of the 2nd Battalion. Some progress was made but the resistance continued heavy against both battalions. On December 10, the attack continued. (Company C, relieved at the Saarlautern end of the bridge by Company I of the 3rd Battalion, crossed the river during the evening and was prepared for commitment on the right of the 1st Battalion.) In the left of the regimental zone, the 1st Battalion encountered a number of enemy tanks which were emplaced inside shattered buildings and serving as pillboxes. Company B captured a large hotel on the northeastern edge of Saarlautern after a pitched battle which raged through the corridors of the hotel and across the great ballroom. However, the hotel was so damaged by the fighting that it was necessary to order the battalion to withdraw from it. In the 2nd Battalion zone, the enemy continued to resist stubbornly and the gains made were small.

On December 11, for the first time since the Fraulautern fighting had begun, there was a marked decrease in German resistance, both in the 1st Battalion and 2nd Battalion zones. The 1st Battalion advanced against light opposition as far as the railroad tracks and sent patrols to probe the pillbox defenses on the other side of them. The 2nd Battalion also advanced rapidly as far as the tracks, and it appeared that the enemy had withdrawn to new positions. Elements of the battalion crossed the tracks and entered one pillbox which was found to be unmanned and captured another. In the latter was the commander of six other pillboxes, and German-speaking S/Sgt. Anthony Dettling persuaded him to surrender them all. Toward evening the regiment received orders from General Twaddle not to advance in force beyond the railroad tracks.

On December 12, the 1st Battalion finished clearing up all resistance on its side of the railroad tracks, and the 2nd Battalion turned right and cleaned up the zone between the tracks and the river. On December 13, the 1st Battalion remained in position, and the 2nd Battalion continued its drive to the right with the intention of moving toward contact with the 378th Infantry bridgehead in Ens Dorf.^o Company E was sent to the north side of the railroad in order to widen the battalion zone and to obtain more room for maneuver. However, the Germans occupied positions of great strength there and progress was difficult. Nevertheless, the operation continued with good results. Ten bunkers were captured and 60 prisoners taken. The battalion advanced past the boundary between the 377th and the 378th Infantry Regiments and cleaned out a pillbox. On December 13, the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry was finally relieved of its mission of guarding the Saarlautern bridge. The 3rd Battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment, the 5th Infantry Division, was at-



Third Army Commander General George S. Patton Jr. at the 379th Infantry Regiment's command post, Sacrautern, during one of his visits to the Division.

tached to the 95th Division, then to the 377th Infantry. By 1900 the relief of the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry had been effected, and the 3rd Battalion prepared to move into position on the line between the 1st and the 2nd battalions.

On December 14, the 1st Battalion, on the left, continued the attack at 0830. Two pillboxes were captured by Company B, and Lieutenant Skala^o of the IPW team talked two more pillboxes into surrendering. At the end of the day, about three blocks had been cleared and 37 prisoners had been taken. The 2nd Battalion remained in position; the plan to join up with the 378th Infantry was postponed until the 3rd Battalion had finished clearing the Germans on its left and rear. The 3rd Battalion attacked at 0830 against the northeastern section of Saarlautern with Companies K and I attacking and with Company L in reserve. The 3rd Battalion, last of the regimental units to enter the Fraulautern fighting, met much the same sort of resistance and made much the same sort of progress as the other battalions. At 1045 Company K had taken six houses and Company I five houses, and by the end of the day about two blocks had been cleared. Company I had a great deal of trouble with a strong pillbox which blocked its advance; tank destroyers were brought up for direct fire on it during the night of December 14-15, and the next morning the pillbox was found to have been abandoned.

On December 15, the 1st Battalion continued the attack at 0800 and made some progress. The 3rd Battalion also attacked, at 0830, and captured 22 houses. The 2nd Battalion remained in position until the 3rd Battalion had advanced further to secure its left flank. During the day, the Germans directed several propaganda efforts against the 377th Infantry. The men of the 377th Infantry were told by a public address system that they had been fighting since December without rest, that they were tired and hungry. If they would surrender, the Germans would give them a hot meal and a warm place to sleep. Later in the day, the Germans fired propaganda leaflets, mainly in the 2nd and 3rd battalion zones; these showed the girl or wife at home longing for the return of the dead soldier and praying for the end of the war.

On December 16-17, the 377th Infantry continued the attack and made advances of a few blocks, so that when it was finally relieved by the 5th Infantry it had gained control of about two-thirds of the town. The relief was begun on December 17 and had been completed by 2330 when the commanding officer of the 2nd Infantry Regiment took over command of the sector. The 377th Infantry moved to Saarlautern and prepared for displacement the next day to an assembly area in the rear where much needed reorganization and rehabilitation could be effected.

THE ENSDORF BRIDGEHEAD

December 5-19

The 379th Infantry seized the bridge at Saarlautern December 3. Two days later, on December 5, the 378th Infantry forced a crossing of the Saar at Ens Dorf and effected the second Division bridgehead. However, at Ens Dorf there was no bridge, and despite valiant and persistent efforts of the engineers, heavy and accurate German artillery made it impossible to construct and maintain one. Consequently, for the first 10 days of the Ens Dorf operation, the 378th Infantry labored under the difficulties of an inadequate supply route and was hampered by the absence of the heavy direct fire weapons necessary in town and pillbox fighting. Nevertheless, steady though slow progress was made in clearing Ens Dorf of the enemy, and by December 16 the engineers were able to alleviate the supply situation by the construction of a ferry on which supply trucks as well as 57-millimeter antitank guns could be taken across the Saar. The effect of this improved supply route on the Ens Dorf fighting was never determined, since at this time the Germans began their offensive in the Ardennes. Consequently, XX Corps, with part of its strength detached for use in the Ardennes, was forced to abandon all of its gains east of the Saar with the exception of the Saarlautern bridgehead, and the 378th Infantry withdrew from Ens Dorf the night of December 20-21.

On December 4, the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry completed its mopping-up operations in Lisdorf, and the 1st Battalion remained in position on the rising ground overlooking the Saar south of Ens Dorf. Preparations were made to effect the crossing the morning of December 5 with the 3rd Battalion on the left, the 1st Battalion on the right and the 2nd Battalion prepared to follow the 3rd Battalion. At the point at which the crossing was to be made there was a flat open stretch of marshy ground about 600 yards in width between the Saar and Ens Dorf. A series of pillboxes protected the edge of the town and had excellent fields of fire across the marsh. Thus, the

only hope of securing a bridgehead at any but an exorbitant price would be to advance without detection to the protection of the town and then to take the pillboxes from the rear. This was particularly true in the case of the 3rd Battalion on the left, and it was here that the most elaborate deceptive measures were carried out. The afternoon of December 4, a feint was made to lead the Germans to believe that the 378th Infantry was planning to cross by the bridge which the 379th Infantry had already taken. All of the motor trains in the 3rd Battalion, the tank destroyers and tanks supporting the battalion and all the foot troops who could be spared made a feint move to the north in the direction of the bridge. At the same time, a purposely ineffective smokescreen was laid down, enough to call attention to the feinted move but not enough to conceal it. Under cover of darkness, all of the troops and vehicles used in the deception maneuver moved back to Lisdorf. Naturally, there was no artillery preparation, although plans had been made to use all possible weapons to neutralize enemy fire if the crossing should be discovered.

The two battalions, the 3rd on the left and the 1st on the right, jumped off in the crossing at 0600. The surprise was completely successful. The 3rd Battalion passed the pillboxes and gained the cover of Ens Dorf without being discovered. The bypassed pillboxes were immediately attacked from the rear; they were poorly defended, and before 0700 six of the seven had been reduced. By this time the reserve company had also crossed the river. By noon, elements of the battalion had reached the railroad tracks, and by evening the first four blocks of Ens Dorf had been cleared. Company I was on the left, Company L in the center and Company K guarded the right flank. The 1st Battalion, on the right, was advancing through more open country, and the fighting was almost exclusively against pillboxes. The battalion early advanced as far as the railroad, and by evening had succeeded in pushing beyond it. Seven pillboxes had been knocked out, 80 prisoners had been taken and it was estimated that approximately 100 Germans had been killed. The 2nd Battalion did not cross behind the 3rd Battalion but was ordered to remain in Lisdorf until the artillery on the crossing sites should slacken.

The crossing had been made with assault boats, and immediately afterwards the engineers began construction of a footbridge. This was completed at 0800 and work was begun on an infantry support bridge. However, the amount of artillery falling on the bridge site soon forced a temporary cessation of the bridge operation, and it also became clear that no bridge could stand much chance of lasting long under the heavy concentrations that were falling. At the same time, the Division was informed that in the Seventh Army zone the Saar

was within a foot of flood stage; no estimate was available as to when this flood stage would reach Saarlautern, but it was assumed that it would be within the next few days.

On the days following the crossing, the 3rd and 1st Battalions made slow progress against stubborn opposition and against a heavily fortified area. The total of pillboxes was impressive, but the advance in blocks was slight. During this time, the artillery and mortar fire on the bridge and crossing sites continued to be heavy. As a result, the planned crossing of the 2nd Battalion, in readiness at Lisdorf,^o was held up until the night of December 7-8. In the meantime, the engineers had worked nightly on the construction of bridges but against almost insuperable obstacles. During the night of December 5-6, work was continued on the infantry support bridge and in addition the first steps were taken toward the installation of a treadway bridge. By morning, the infantry support bridge was complete but could not be used because of accurate fire directed against it; the treadway bridge was progressing slowly, and the footbridge had been knocked out by artillery. The night of December 6-7, work continued on the treadway bridge but artillery both interrupted the construction and caused great damage, not only to the partly built bridge but also to the engineer equipment being used. The morning of December 7, the infantry support bridge was knocked out by artillery and during the late afternoon other hits destroyed it completely.

The night of December 7-8, it was decided to send across the 2nd Battalion, and since all bridging was out, assault boats were used for the crossing. The first waves pushed out at 2100, and by 0130 the entire battalion was in position, having relieved the 3rd Battalion in the right portion of its sector. This enabled the 3rd Battalion to drive forward more aggressively, but nevertheless progress was slow; the battalion captured one pillbox and softened up three others during the day. The 2nd Battalion attacked at 0600; by evening it had cleared part of its assigned zone and had captured a large pillbox which yielded 16 prisoners. The 1st Battalion continued operations against four pillboxes which had not yet been reduced. By the evening of December 8, the 378th Infantry had captured 31 pillboxes in the Ens Dorf bridgehead, a remarkable achievement, in view of the fact that no vehicles had been able to cross the river for supply purposes and that not even 57-millimeter antitank guns were available to furnish the direct point-blank fire which usually played so important a part in the reduction of pillboxes. Supply continued to be effected through assault boats and carrying parties. Groups from the battalion rear echelon groups and from regimental units brought the needed supplies down to the river and then crossed them to the other side under cover of darkness. Here they were picked up by

groups from the Ens Dorf bridgehead and hand-carried across the 600-yard marsh. This was badly cratered and, in addition, had several small streams and pools to make walking across it, even unburdened, no easy matter. To negotiate it with a case of "C" rations or with a load of mortar ammunition was extremely difficult, and it must also be remembered that the area was under almost constant artillery and mortar fire. Nevertheless, until the last nights of the bridgehead, these carrying parties were the only means of supply. They usually completed their work before midnight, and when they had cleared the bank the engineers would begin work.

It will be remembered that on the night of December 7-8 the bridges had been knocked out. However, by morning the footbridge had been repaired and it was expected that it could be used the next night. During the day, the engineer equipment for the treadway bridge was finally put out of action when the last crane was destroyed. General Twaddle^o directed Lt. Col. James I. Crowther,^o commander of the 320th Engineer Battalion, to discontinue attempts to build the heavy bridge and to make plans by which the weapons and vehicles needed by the 378th Infantry might be ferried across. The same morning, the ominous news was received that the Saar had risen almost two feet, and it was clear that the flat land between the river and Ens Dorf would soon be almost impassible. Nevertheless, plans were made to construct two infantry support rafts by which antitank guns and a few jeeps could be crossed; in the event these were not successful, LVT's (Landing Vehicles Tracked or "alligators") would be used. By midnight of December 8-9, the expected flood had arrived, and the Saar, normally 200 feet wide, now had a width of 400 to 500 feet. As a result, the vehicles were unable to reach the edge of the stream through the slime and the mud and the ferries themselves could not be used where there was no clearly defined stream bank. However, the engineers were able to construct an improvised footbridge some 350 feet long, and supplies were taken across this to be picked up by the usual carrying parties. The LVT's could not be used because of the conditions of the bank, and at 0800 December 9 the footbridge was knocked out by artillery.

On December 9, little progress was made in the bridgehead. The 3rd Battalion made three attempts to take four pillboxes in its line of advance, but all were unsuccessful because of intense small arms, mortar and artillery fire. The 2nd Battalion advanced only a few yards against bitter opposition. The 1st Battalion continued operations against pillboxes in its zone and was also forced to drive off a strong counterattack in which they captured 25 prisoners and killed an estimated 30 of the enemy. The night of December 9-10,

the footbridge was again completed shortly after midnight. However, heavy artillery stopped work on the infantry support bridge, and the flood still prevented the use of a ferry or the successful employment of LVT's.

On December 10, the 3rd and 1st battalions made little progress. The 2nd Battalion was hit by two counterattacks. The first, with an estimated strength of two infantry platoons, came at dawn and was quickly driven back. The prisoners taken in this counterattack, from the 1st and 4th companies of the 486 Antitank Battalion, declared that their battalion had been given the mission of counterattacking at dawn and at dusk against the Ens Dorf bridgehead until it was eliminated. Later in the morning, units of the same battalion again attacked the 2nd Battalion, this time in strength estimated at 150 to 200. The Germans advanced recklessly and large numbers of them moved into the direct fields of fire of the 2nd Battalion machine guns. About half of the attacking force were killed or disabled and the rest withdrew in confusion.

The night of December 10-11 was again one of difficulty for the engineers. Two ferries had been planned. From one of the sites the engineers were driven away by artillery fire; at 2200 they received 12 rounds in two minutes and at midnight they received 22 rounds in 30 seconds. Two jeeps and one two and one-half ton truck were lost. At the second site the ferry was completed at 0330, but the sudden drop of the Saar River during the night created new problems and it was not until 0630 that the raft was finally loaded. The approaches to the far bank could not be negotiated, and the nearness of daylight made it imperative to cease operations and withdraw the vehicles. As a result, the Ens Dorf bridgehead was still without vehicles and without weapons heavier than machine guns. However, the usual carrying parties made their regular trips across the flooded and shell-cratered marsh, and it was clear that as long as a footbridge or assault boats were available the infantry would continue to get the minimum necessary supplies of food and ammunition in the Ens Dorf bridgehead. On December 11, German resistance lessened temporarily in the Ens Dorf bridgehead just as it did in the Saarlautern bridgehead, and the 378th Infantry was able to advance somewhat more rapidly, particularly in the 2nd Battalion zone. During the afternoon, both the footbridge and the infantry support raft were knocked out by artillery; the footbridge was temporarily abandoned but plans were made to resume work on the raft at dark. However, the Germans were even more active than usual with their artillery during the night, and at 0615 the Division Engineer reported: "Ferry not in, footbridge not in and the infantry support bridge not in. It

is very probable that none of these bridges will get in. Enemy artillery fire still heavy." Nevertheless, the essential supplies had been taken to Ensdorf by the usual route of assault boats and carrying parties.

Small gains were again made by the 378th Infantry on December 12, 13 and 14. The bridgehead was still small and confined, and no more than a few hundred yards of Ensdorf had been cleared. During this period, the engineers continued to work with ferries and with LVT's, but without success, and the only supply line open was that by way of the assault boats. Finally, on the night of December 14-15, the 537th Engineer Light Ponton Company constructed a flying ferry, and three 57-millimeter guns with two prime movers were crossed to the 3rd Battalion. The night of December 15-16 the engineers were again successful. Five antitank guns, one 75-millimeter gun and six prime movers were crossed. Artillery fire on the bridging and crossing sites appeared to be slackening, and it was possible to reconstruct the footbridge. On the succeeding nights, the engineers crossed loaded two and one-half ton trucks with supplies as well as other vehicles; on the night of December 17-18, road mats were hauled across the river and engineer crews worked until daylight in improving the road across the flat ground between the Saar and Ensdorf.

Under these conditions, the battalions in the bridgehead found their supply problem alleviated, and the presence of the 57-millimeter guns increased the security against mechanized attack as well as providing some direct fire against pillboxes. Nevertheless, progress continued to be slow. On the one hand, there was the tremendous strength of the Siegfried Line, particularly in a situation where the more powerful direct fire assault guns were not available. In addition, the 378th Infantry was both under-strength and exhausted; replacements were not available, and the shortage of men simply meant more security guard and more fighting for the tired infantrymen in the Ensdorf area. The problem of rest was particularly difficult in a bridgehead where no one could be more than two or three blocks from the front.

Since the ferrying of weapons had been so successful, plans were being made to move a platoon of tank destroyers to Ensdorf beginning at midnight, the night of December 19-20. However, in the afternoon of December 19, General Twaddle,^o acting on warning orders from Corps, directed that no bridging operations should be attempted that night and that guns and vehicles should be brought back from the east side of the Saar. During the night, 29 vehicles, ranging from the ubiquitous jeep to the indispensable two and one-

half ton truck, were brought back from Ens Dorf and, in addition, 15 antitank guns were returned.

The next afternoon, General Twaddle,^o in accord with XX Corps Operations Instructions No. 45, directed that the 378th Infantry abandon the Ens Dorf bridgehead that night. One battalion was to remain in Lisdorf to guard the west bank of the Saar, and the remainder of the regiment was to move to an assembly area. Accordingly, plans were made for a coordinated withdrawal. The engineers built a second footbridge and assault boats with their crews were in readiness should the bridges be knocked out. The battalions placed demolitions to blow all the captured pillboxes which might still be usable for the enemy; the 2nd Battalion alone used some six tons of TNT in blowing six pillboxes and other installations. Shortly before midnight, the three battalions moved out. The 1st Battalion crossed by assault boat, and the 2nd and 3rd battalions moved over the bridges. By 2330, all had returned, the engineers had taken out the support raft and work had been begun on the removal of the footbridges. The demolitions which had been left in Ens Dorf with time fuses could be seen exploding, and the sky was lit with fires from burning command post and supply installations. Shortly afterwards, Division Artillery fired a TOT mission on Ens Dorf in the hope of catching by surprise enemy who might have already infiltrated back into it.

At 0230, the 2nd Battalion was organized for defense of the west bank of the Saar in the Lisdorf^o area, and to its right the 95th Reconnaissance Troop patrolled the bank of the Saar to the Division boundary and made contact with elements of the 6th Cavalry Group of the XII Corps. These two units held the 95th Division front and all the regiments were in assembly areas. However, the German offensive, which had made necessary the withdrawal from the Ens Dorf bridgehead, also made it necessary to send the 5th Division to the north, and on December 22, the 95th Division again held the Saar line and the Saarlautern bridgehead.

The story of the winning of the two bridgeheads, Saarlautern and Ens Dorf, has now been told through the relief by the 5th Division in the first on December 17 and the abandonment of the second on December 20. It remains to resume the Division story beginning December 16 with the Corps order for the relief of the 95th Division in the Saarlautern bridgehead.

THE SAAR

December 16-January 29

The XX Corps Field Order No. 14 of December 16, which provided for the relief of the 95th Division by the 5th Division in the Saarlautern bridgehead, was an attack order calling for a continuation of the drive which began with the assault on Metz. The Third Army continued the advance northeast toward its objective, the Mainz^o-Frankfurt^o-Darmstadt^o area. In the northern sector of the Army front, the XX Corps would attack December 18 to continue penetration of the Siegfried Line, prepared to exploit a break-through and to continue the attack northeast. In the southern sector, the XII Corps would also attack to the northeast, and in the center the III Corps would maintain pressure on the enemy, prepared on Army order, to cross the Saar and to seize Neunkirchen^o (northeast of Saarbruecken^o and 20 miles east of Saarlautern).

In the XX Corps zone, the initial effort would be made by the 90th and 5th Infantry Divisions. Both would attack out of their bridgeheads to the northeast on December 18, the 90th Division out of the Dillingen bridgehead on the left and the 5th Division out of the Saarlautern bridgehead on the right. These two divisions would be prepared to pass the 10th Armored Division through their lines and to follow and consolidate its gains. The 95th Division would continue to enlarge the Ens Dorf bridgehead and from it establish and maintain contact with the 5th Division in the Saarlautern bridgehead. In addition, it would protect the XX Corps' right flank and maintain contact with the III Corps. On December 17, the XX Corps gave the 95th Division the further mission, after it had been relieved in the Saarlautern bridgehead, of providing one regimental combat team prepared for employment as Corps reserve in any part of the Corps zone. Combat Team Nine was originally given this assignment, and at 0930 December 19 it was relieved and replaced by Combat Team Seven.

Meanwhile, the relief of the 95th Division by the 5th Division in the Saarlautern bridgehead had been executed without incident. Command passed from Colonel Bacon^o to the commanding officer of the 11th Infantry at 1115 December 17 and from Colonel Gaillard^o to

the commanding officer of the 2nd Infantry at 2330 the same day; command passed from General Twaddle^o to the commanding general of the 5th Division at 0600 December 18. The 377th and 379th Infantry Regiments moved to assembly areas in the vicinity of Falck and Teterchen respectively.¹ The Division Artillery (except for the 920th Field Artillery Battalion) remained in position supporting the 378th Infantry.

The 90th and 5th divisions attacked as ordered December 18. Some progress was made, but in neither case was a breakthrough achieved; in the Saarlautern bridgehead, for example, the 5th Division pushed forward between one and two blocks in two days' fighting. What further results the attack might have achieved remains unknown, for on December 16 the Germans began their great counter-offensive in the Ardennes; the Third U. S. Army soon shifted the bulk of its forces to the north against the enemy threat, and the XX Corps was compelled to pass to the defensive along the Saar. Corps issued the first orders for this change December 19, and the general plan was outlined in Operations Instructions No. 45 of December 20. The Corps was to retire at once to defensive positions generally along the Saar River with its divisions abreast, the 90th Division in the north and the 95th Division in the south. However, pressure was to be maintained and the offensive action continued until the last possible moment before the final withdrawal. Further, the maximum demolition and destruction of houses and pillboxes was to be executed in connection with the withdrawal. The 90th Division would begin the withdrawal of vehicles and equipment from the Dillingen bridgehead the night of December 19-20, and all troops were to be withdrawn by 0800 December 22. The 95th Division would begin withdrawal of vehicles and equipment from the Ensdorf bridgehead the night of December 19-20, and it would complete the withdrawal of troops before 0800 December 21. Although the XX Corps was abandoning the two bridgeheads at Dillingen and Ensdorf, the Saarlautern bridgehead was too valuable to give up. The 5th Division was being pulled out of the line for commitment in the north, but it was to be relieved by the 95th Division the night of December 21-22. The XX Corps would retain the Saarlautern bridgehead with its indestructible bridge, an unhappy reminder for the Germans of the way in which they had been outmaneuvered December 3 and a thorn in the enemy's side as long as the Americans held it.

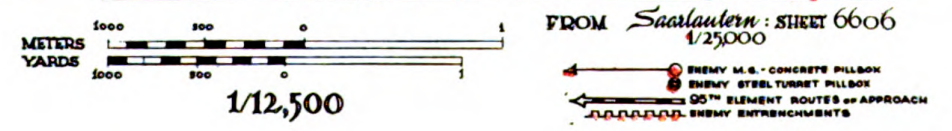
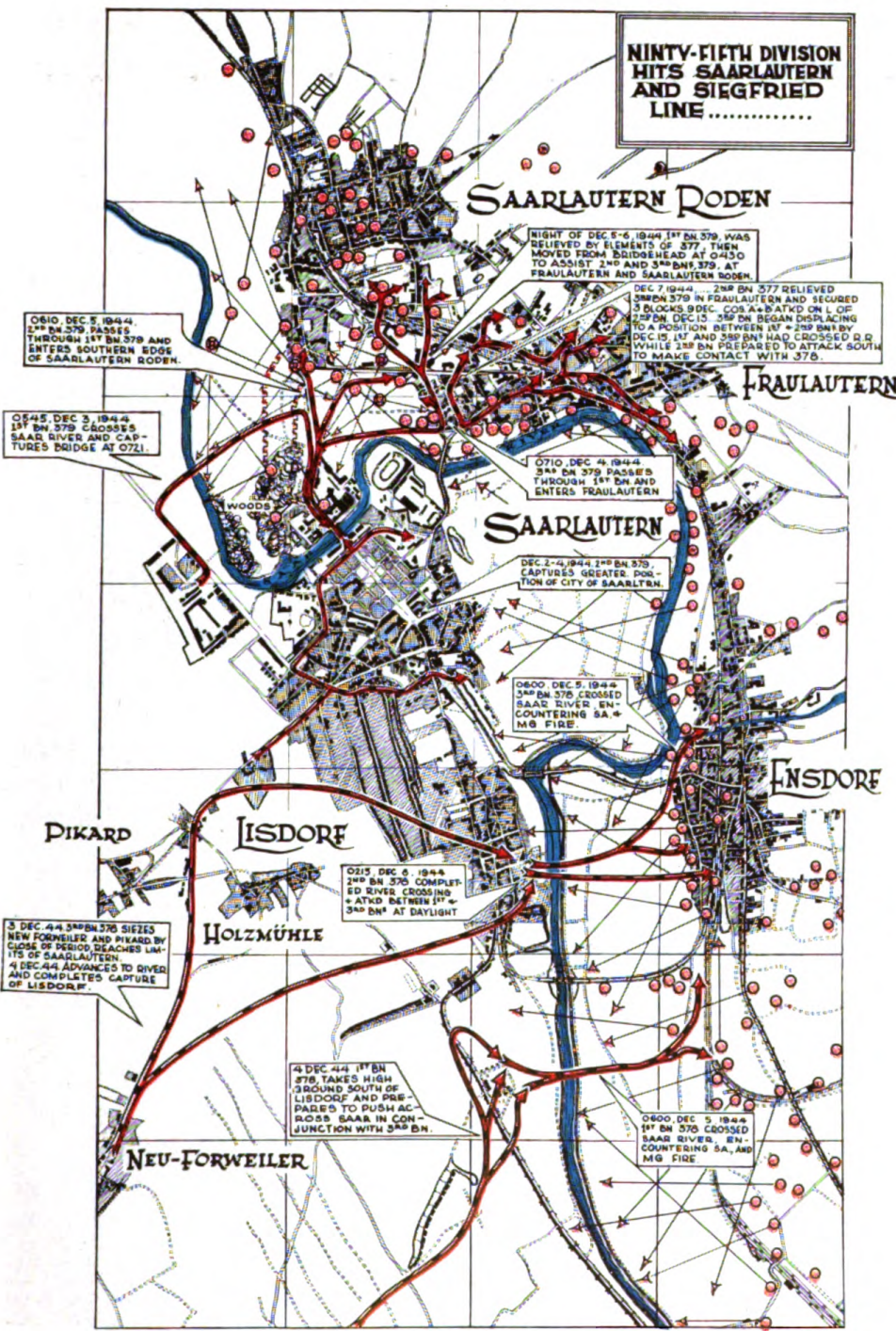
¹The 379th Infantry closed in at 2050 December 17 with the 1st Battalion at Teterchen,^o the 2nd Battalion at Vaudreching^o and the 3rd Battalion at Velving^o and Valmunster.^o The 377th Infantry closed in at 1600 December 18 with the 1st Battalion at Coume,^o the 2nd Battalion at Hargarten^o and the 3rd Battalion at Falck.^o

On December 21, the XX Corps issued Field Order No. 15, which stated the plan of operations more fully. The Third Army was to defend along the Saar and to initiate offensive action against the German penetration in Luxembourg. The XX Corps was to defend west of the Saar River, except at Saarlautern, where it would continue to defend the bridgehead. The XII Corps would be operating to its north, and the XV Corps would be in defensive positions to the south. Within the XX Corps, the 90th Division would be on the left (north), defending a line running from Nohn^o (about 10 miles northwest of the junction of the Nied River with the Saar) to the Nied River. The 95th Division, on the right, was given additional territory both to the north and the south; it would defend from the Nied River^o to Wadgassen^o (on the Saar about five miles southeast of Saarlautern).¹

The specific way in which the Division would carry out its mission was defined by Operations Instructions No. 15 of December 21. The 379th Infantry, minus the 3rd Battalion, would relieve elements of the 2nd Infantry Regiment in the left sector of the bridgehead. The 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry was to be moved to the bridgehead area December 22, prepared to attack on Division order in the zone of the 377th Infantry to repel any German attack. The 377th Infantry, minus its 2nd Battalion, would relieve elements of the 2nd Infantry Regiment in the right sector of the bridgehead, and the 2nd Battalion would relieve the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry in defensive position in Lisdorf. The 378th Infantry, minus its 2nd Battalion, would move from its assembly area in the vicinity of Hayes^o on December 23 to a forward assembly area to include Denting,^o Coume,^o Teterchen,^o Hargarten^o and Falck.^o Here it would engage in rehabilitation and training; orders for its employment as Division reserve would be issued later. The 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, when relieved at Lisdorf,^o would move to the regimental forward assembly area. Other Division units were assigned normal missions, although it should be noted that the 95th Reconnaissance Troop was given the extensive assignment of patrolling the west bank of the Saar along the entire Division front with the exception of the Saarlautern-Lisdorf area. The relief of the 5th Division was effected without incident. At 2400 December 21, command passed to Colonel Gaillard,^o and at 0400 December 22 command passed to Colonel Bacon.^o The 95th Division was back in its bridgehead.

While the Division had been making preparations to relieve the

¹The Division's attachments as stated in the Corps field order were: The 778th Tank Battalion, the 547th A.A.A. Battalion, the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 807th Tank Destroyer Battalion and Companies A and D of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion.



5th Division in the bridgehead, the first steps had been taken toward supplying the reinforcements so badly needed to restore the 95th Division's combat strength. Over 3,000 men were available, a large percentage of them transferred to the infantry from other arms and services and they were to be given a week's training near Metz and then to be assigned to divisional units. Initially, the 95th Division would have full charge of the training program and would supply a cadre of 62 officers and 124 non-commissioned officers. When the week's training had been completed, the reinforcements would first be used to bring the 95th Division's infantry regiments to Table of Organization strength; the remainder would be given to the 90th Infantry Division. General Faith^o was placed in command of the Metz training center, which was operated from December 18 to 26. On December 27, the 1900 reinforcements received by the Division were assigned to regiments, and their training continued under the men of the units in which they were fighting.

The 95th Division maintained its defensive positions along the Saar and at Saarlautern from December 22, 1944, until January 29, 1945. The general organization of the Division during this period will be described first, both with respect to the immediate holding of the front line and with respect to counterattack and withdrawal plans. Second, an account will be given of the day by day developments during the period, of the ways in which the Germans tried to break down the Division's defenses and of the ways in which the Division, within the limits of its defensive mission and organization, endeavored to keep the enemy misinformed and off balance.

DEFENSIVE POSITIONS AND PLANS

During the period from December 22 to the end of the month, the Division remained generally in the positions directed by Operations Instructions No. 15. The 379th Infantry had two battalions in the left of the bridgehead and one in reserve. The 377th Infantry had two battalions in the right of the bridgehead and one in Lisdorf.^o The 378th Infantry was in reserve, and it was conducting training and rehabilitation in a forward assembly area. Some slight changes were made almost immediately by Operations Instructions No. 17, mainly with the aim of strengthening the Division's defenses in the north and south portions of its sector. Company L (minus one platoon) of the 379th Infantry was directed to occupy Rehlingen^o on December 22. With a platoon of tank destroyers in support, it was to prevent enemy occupation of the town and was to capture or kill all Germans crossing the Saar River in that area. In addition, it was to destroy with fire all targets east of the Saar in Saarfels,^o Beckingen^o and the Saarlautern Forest^o (Foret de Saarlouis). A platoon of Company L was given the same mission in Wallerfangen^o and was to take under fire all targets in Dillingen^o and Saarlautern-Roden. In the right of Division's sector, a platoon of Company E of the 378th Infantry was to occupy Wadgassen^o December 23. It was to be reinforced with a minimum of two .50-caliber machine guns, and its mission was to prevent German occupation of Wadgassen,^o to destroy all enemy crossing the Saar in the area and to engage with fire all suitable targets in Bous,^o north of Wadgassen^o on the east side of the Saar. In addition, the reinforced 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry would be held in mobile motorized reserve at Ueberherrn,^o five miles southwest of Saarlautern, for employment on Division order to destroy all enemy penetrating the Division sector.

On January 1-2, a somewhat different defensive organization was instituted. The 379th Infantry, to which the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry had been attached, relieved all elements of the 377th Infantry in the bridgehead, and the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry relieved the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry at Lisdorf. The 377th Infantry became Division reserve and closed into an assembly area in the vicinity of

Hargarten.^o The 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry remained in mobile reserve in Ueberherrn.^o

Under the new disposition of forces, as defined by Operations Instructions No. 22 of December 30, one regiment (either the 377th or the 379th Infantry), to which an additional battalion was attached from the 378th Infantry, held the Saarlautern area and the north Division sector. Of the four battalions at the disposal of the bridgehead commander, two were on the line in the bridgehead, one was in reserve and the fourth battalion defended the west bank of the Saar from Saarlautern north to the Nied River.^o Of the last battalion, one reinforced rifle company was to garrison Rehlingen^o and another Wallerfangen;^o the remainder of the battalion would assemble in Guisingen.^o One regiment (either the 377th or the 379th Infantry) was in reserve. Finally, the 378th Infantry had one battalion attached to the bridgehead regiment, one battalion in defensive positions at Lisdorf^o and one battalion in mobile reserve at Ueberherrn.

This solution was maintained as long as the 95th Division remained in the Saar area, but units were moved from one position to another. From January 2 through January 11, the 379th Infantry, with the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry attached, assumed responsibility for the bridgehead, and the 377th Infantry was in reserve. From January 11 through January 23, the 377th Infantry assumed responsibility for the bridgehead, and the 379th Infantry was in reserve. The 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry remained in position in the bridgehead after January 11 and was attached to the 377th Infantry, but on January 17 the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry took its place and the 3rd Battalion became mobile reserve at Ueberherrn.^o Finally, from January 23 until the relief of the 95th Division, the 379th Infantry took over the bridgehead and the 377th Infantry became reserve. Throughout the entire period from January 2 until January 28, the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry remained in defensive positions in Lisdorf^o and Wadgassen.^{o1}

¹The following gives the detail of these changes as far as they concern the infantry battalions:

377th Infantry.

1st Battalion:

Completed relief of elements of 2nd Infantry in bridgehead 2100 December 21. Relieved in bridgehead 2100 January 1. 377th Infantry in Division reserve January 2-10. Relieved 1st Battalion 379th Infantry in bridgehead at 2100 January 11. Relieved in bridgehead by 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry by 1900 January 22. 377th Infantry in Division reserve January 23-28.

2nd Battalion:

Completed relief of 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry at Lisdorf at 2000 December 22. Relieved in Lisdorf^o by 1st Battalion 378th Infantry at

2125 January 2. 377th Infantry in Division reserve January 2-10. Completed relief of 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry in northern portion of Division sector 2100 January 10. Relieved by 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry 2100 January 21. Moved to Hargarten* 2206 January 21. 377th Infantry in Division reserve January 23-28.

3rd Battalion:

Completed relief of elements of 2nd Infantry in bridgehead 2000 December 21. Relieved by elements of the 378th Infantry 2200 January 1. 377th Infantry in Division reserve January 2-10. Completed relief of 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry in bridgehead at 2030 January 11. Relieved by 1st Battalion 379th Infantry at 0100 January 23. 377th Infantry in Division Reserve January 23-28.

378th Infantry.

1st Battalion:

On December 21, in regimental assembly area vicinity of Hayes.* On December 23, moved to new assembly area vicinity Hargarten* by 1300. Motorized and moved to Ueberherrn* on January 1. Relieved 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry in Lisdorf* at 2125 January 2. Remained in position until January 29.

2nd Battalion:

Relieved at Lisdorf* by 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry at 2000 December 22. Closed in at Ueberherrn* as mobile reserve 2400 December 22. Engaged in attack on Division flank (see text) from 0500 January 1 to 0230 January 3. Relieved 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry in bridgehead 2100 January 17. Relieved by elements of 328th Infantry January 29.

3rd Battalion:

On December 21, in regimental assembly area vicinity of Hayes.* Closed into new assembly area vicinity Hargarten* 1540 December 23. Closed into Guisingen* with patrol mission (see text) 0900 December 24. Returned to assembly area 1430 December 25. Attached to 379th Infantry 1200 January 1. Closed into bridgehead 2150 January 1. Attached 377th Infantry at 2100 January 11. Relieved by 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry 2100 January 17. Closed into Ueberherrn* as mobile reserve 2100 January 17. Relieved by elements of 328th Infantry January 29.

379th Infantry.

1st Battalion:

Completed relief of elements of 2nd Infantry in bridgehead at 2100 December 21. Relieved by 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry and became bridgehead reserve 2400 January 1. Relieved by 1st Battalion 377th Infantry at 1900 January 11. 379th Infantry in Division reserve January 12-21. Completed relief of 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry in bridgehead at 0100 January 23. Relieved by elements of 104th Infantry 0215 January 29.

2nd Battalion:

Completed relief of elements of 2nd Infantry in bridgehead at 2400 December 21. Completed relief of elements of 2nd Battalion at Rehlingen*-Wallerfangen* by 2130 December 29. Relieved by 2nd Battalion in bridgehead at 2105 December 30. Moved to new position in north sector by 0530 January 2. Relieved by 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry 2100 January 10. 379th Infantry in Division reserve January 12-21. Completed relief of 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry at 2000 January 21 in northern sector. Relieved by elements 104th Infantry by 2345 January 28.

3rd Battalion:

On December 21, the 3rd Battalion was motorized in an assembly area vicinity Velving.* On December 22, closed into a forward assembly area vicinity Saarlautern by 1030 as regimental reserve. Completed relief of 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry in Bridgehead by 2105 December 30. Completed relief of elements of 1st Battalion 379th Infantry in bridgehead

by 2400 January 1. Relieved by 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry by 2030 January 11. 379th Infantry in Division reserve January 12-21. Relieved 1st Battalion 377th Infantry vicinity Saarlautern by 1900 January 22. Relieved by elements of the 104th Infantry by 1900 January 28.

Immediately after relief of the 5th Division, the 95th Division began work on counterattack plans. By Operations Instructions No. 17 of December 23, the 378th Infantry, then in Division reserve, was directed to make plans in coordination with the 778th Tank Battalion and with Division Artillery against three possible enemy penetrations. Two of these penetrations were expected from the east and southeast. To the right of the Division, in the XV Corps zone, the enemy held a bridgehead west of the Saar at Saarbruecken^o and an attack out of this bridgehead would at once threaten seriously the Division's right flank and rear. The Division counterattack plans were supplemented by Corps preparations. Initially, Corps had available for commitment in the Division sector a combat command or a regimental combat team, but before the end of December arrangements had been made to employ the 10th Armored Division (minus one combat command) as well.

In addition to these standard counterattack plans, which did not differ essentially from those which had been prepared for the defense of the Pagny bridgehead, the 95th Division was also directed to be ready, on Corps order, to withdraw from the defense of the bridgehead and of the west bank of the Saar, to fall back with a series of delaying actions and to occupy and defend a sector of the Maginot Line^o about 15 miles southwest of the Saar. The general plan for this withdrawal was indicated by Operations Instructions No. 18, issued December 24, and preparations for the withdrawal would be the primary concern of the reserve elements of the Division as long as it remained in the Saar. Three lines were set up for delaying positions, and these lines were generally parallel to the Saar, running southeast to northwest. The first, the "Air Line", was located along the crest of the Saar plateau, where the Germans had defended so stubbornly in the last days before the Division reached the river. Behind it, along commanding ground midway between the Air Line and the Maginot Line, was the "Bee Line". Finally, there was the "Chow Line", the Maginot Line itself, and it alone of the three lines was protected by a preliminary outpost line of resistance. The 377th and the 379th Infantry Regiments, then engaged in defending the Saarlautern area, were to be prepared to withdraw in sector on Division order. They were to fight stubborn, delaying actions on the Air and Bee lines, and they were to withdraw to successive positions only on Division order. In addition, they were to be prepared to withdraw directly to the Chow or Maginot Line, fighting only the necessary



Christmas in Saarlautern: A regimental command post.

rearguard actions. This last provision was a precaution against the danger mentioned above, an attack from the right through XV Corps zone; there could be no purpose in defending the Air Line and the Bee Line if the enemy had already outflanked them. The main defense of the Division flank was assigned to the 378th Infantry, the reserve regiment. First, it was to be prepared to execute the counter-attack plans already noted and, second, it was to be ready, on Division order, to occupy and hold the high ground east of the line l'Hopital^o to St. Avold,^o attacking if necessary to secure this line. L'Hopital^o was about 15 miles south of Saarlautern, and the importance of the line running south from it to St. Avold^o was that it covered the communication routes by which a large-scale attack from the Saarbruecken^o bridgehead would enter the 95th Division zone.

The defensive position of the Division on its right flank was strengthened when the XX Corps attached the 5th Ranger Battalion on December 27. By Operations Instructions No. 20, the battalion, which could be committed only in the event of a penetration of the Division zone, was directed to prepare plans to meet an enemy attack launched from the vicinity of Saarbruecken along the axis Forbach^o-St. Avold^o-Metz. Four delaying positions were to be reconnoitered and organized, and the final delaying position was located at St. Avold^o. Consequently, while the enemy was breaking through the first delaying positions of the ranger battalion, time would be gained for the 95th Division reserve regiment to occupy its line of defense, and the ranger battalion would ultimately fall back to join and to strengthen this line.

Later on January 11, Corps directed the 95th Division to prepare a strong covering position from Carling^o (less than a mile west of l'Hopital)^o to St. Avold^o and to develop the Carling^o and St. Avold^o areas into organized defensive positions. For this purpose the Corps engineer was to make available two engineer battalions.¹ In addition, the 206th Engineer Battalion was to be prepared to occupy and defend the defensive positions in the vicinity of St. Avold^o in the event of a strong enemy attack in that area.

Extensive work was done by the companies of the 320th Engineer Battalion in the preparation of demolitions and obstacles to aid the Division plan of withdrawal and defense. When the Division relieved the 5th Division in the bridgehead, the engineers were directed to prepare the famous bridge for destruction, and on December 25 the Division engineer announced that there were 280 pounds of dynamite in each of the eight piers of the bridge. The explosives

¹On January 11, the 187th Engineer Battalion and the 281st Engineer Battalion were placed in support of the 95th Division.

were connected for firing by four separate wires; all wires in the open were protected by planks and sandbagging and the circuits were checked periodically. Later, elaborate plans were made for additional demolitions and roadblocks in connection with the Air, Bee and Chow lines as well as in connection with the l'Hopital^o-St. Avold^o switch positions. The Engineer Completion Report of January 14, for example, listed over 250 obstacles in the Division sector with quantities of explosives and mines to be used for each.

In addition, the three regiments all made extensive reconnaissance in the sectors which they would defend and, when in reserve, used one or more battalion in digging defensive positions along the various lines. Several dress rehearsals for the occupation of the withdrawal positions were held. At 1000 January 14, for example, the 5th Ranger Battalion and the supporting 206th Engineer Battalion conducted a rehearsal of occupation of the St. Avold^o defensive positions. On January 17, the 1st Battalion 379th Infantry was given a practice alert to occupy previously installed defensive positions along the l'Hopital^o-St. Avold line.^o The battalion was alerted at 0815 in its assembly area in the vicinity of Falck.^o At 0930 the battalion was ready to move and at 0940 the heavy weapons company moved out. The trucks for the foot elements arrived at 1015 and the movement began

A sidelight of war: 95th Division medics sample German beer in a captured Saarlautern brewery.



at 1030. The heavy weapons company was in position by 1030 and the entire battalion was in position by 1145. The 5th Ranger Battalion and a platoon of the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion were alerted when the 1st Battalion began to move and were already in position when the infantry arrived.

The Germans never launched the large-scale attack which would have made necessary the Division withdrawal to the Maginot Line,^o and the plan remains a part of the shadowy tactics that might have happened. Nevertheless, it dominated the planning and reconnaissance of the various headquarters groups during the defensive period in the Saar, and day after day one or more battalions would be occupied in digging the positions demanded by the plan or in rehearsing the occupation of these positions. The infantrymen saw again under more peaceful conditions the country over which they had advanced so rapidly on the drive to the Saar, and the troops of the Division came to realize that Americans as well as Germans might sometimes fight withdrawing actions with demolitions and roadblocks.

CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY

December 22-January 29

During the night of December 21-22, the 95th Division had completed the relief of the 5th Division and was again responsible for the Saarlautern bridgehead. The Germans evidently realized that a change had been made, and on December 22-23 they sent out strong patrols to determine the nature of the change. On December 22, the enemy attempted a reconnaissance in force across the Saar between Lisdorf^o and Wadgassen.^o An advance guard of 20 men crossed at dawn. They were taken under fire by an outpost of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, then in defensive position at Lisdorf.^o Several of the advance guard were killed and the remainder captured. Later, the main body of the force, estimated at a hundred men, crossed to the west bank and began to push north. This group was also taken under fire and heavy casualties were inflicted. (65 enemy dead were counted). The majority of the group then withdrew east of the Saar under cover of a smoke screen. It was believed that some had escaped into the woods along the Saar, and the 2nd Battalion, aided by a platoon of tanks and by elements of the 95th Reconnaissance Troop, searched the woods during the afternoon. No enemy were found, and it was clear that those who had not been captured or killed had managed to withdraw across the river.

On December 23, the Germans patrolled aggressively all along the Division front. In the north, a four-man patrol was captured in Itzbach,^o and a patrol of unknown size was located in the woods near the town. During the night, a German patrol recaptured a pillbox in Saarlautern-Roden, and a 40-man combat patrol was directed against the 377th Infantry in Fraulautern. In the early morning, a 15-man patrol attempted to infiltrate into southeastern Fraulautern, and in the afternoon another 15-man patrol armed with bazookas tried to penetrate the 379th Infantry positions in Saarlautern-Roden. In the south, a seven-man patrol was captured on the southern outskirts of Lisdorf in the late afternoon.

The Division reacted aggressively on all sectors of the front against this German activity. The story of the defense of the bridgehead will be considered in a chronological account of the Division operations, but brief summaries of the tactics employed west of the Saar will be given beforehand. In the north sector, a systematic search was made of the main woods. The 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry, then in Division reserve, was directed to patrol the woods north of the line St. Barbara°-Wallerfangen° as far as the east-west road through Bueren°, and a platoon of light tanks of Company D 778th Tank Battalion was attached for the operation. The 3rd Battalion closed into Guisingen° at 0900 December 24 and began to work the woods north from Ober-Limberg°. No enemy were encountered until the battalion forces were within a mile of Pachten°. Here 12 Germans were found in well dug-in positions with machine guns and mortars. Two were killed but the rest escaped. One platoon was left as security, and the remainder of the battalion returned to Ober-Limberg°. Next day, the operation was completed in the woods south of Ober-Limberg°, and the 3rd Battalion returned to the regimental assembly area. During the remainder of the month, the area was patrolled by the company stationed in Rehlingen° and Wallerfangen°, and in January as noted above an entire battalion was used to control this northern sector with a company at Rehlingen°, another at Wallerfangen° and the remainder of the battalion at Guisingen°. Regular security patrols were sent through the woods and all the towns, and on several occasions ambush patrols were dispatched to points where there was evidence of German activity. These measures were sufficient to prevent most enemy infiltration, and only in isolated instances was contact made. On January 3, for example, a 12-man German patrol attacked a Corps artillery observation post near Itzbach°, but was driven off; on January 16, a seven-man patrol was captured in Kerlingen°, and on January 18, one of the American security patrols met a 14-man German patrol and dispersed it.

In the south, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry had cleaned out the woods along the Saar December 22, and on December 23 a platoon of Company E set up positions at Wadgassen°. Thereafter, the Germans made only one attempt, on December 30, to cross the Saar in the Division sector and this was quickly repulsed. The Germans held a bridgehead across the Saar to the right of the Division sector, and it was consequently possible for them to send patrols into the Division zone without crossing the river. However, they did this but rarely, although on one occasion, to be described later, they mounted a dangerous counterattack from the bridgehead. To check German patrol activity, American security patrols were sent out both

by the platoon (after January 1, the company) stationed in Wadgassen^o and by the battalion in mobile reserve at Ueberherrn. In addition, a series of patrols were sent by the 378th Infantry into the tremendous Karlsbrunn Forest^o south of Wadgassen,^o but no enemy were contacted. Patrols were also sent out from Ueberherrn^o and from Wadgassen,^o particularly after the counterattack of January 1, to gain information of enemy dispositions and to take prisoners. During the night of January 6-7, for example, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry sent a combat patrol against some houses known to be occupied by the enemy in Schaffhausen^o (less than a mile southeast of Wadgassen^o). The patrol encountered booby traps, mines and concertina wire. Nevertheless, they reached their objective and after a fire-fight a prisoner was captured. The prisoner later declared that three men had been killed in the cellar of the house during the patrol's attack, that the outpost was held by seven men and that his company had been formed from the remnants of the German counter-attacking force of January 1.

The night of January 10-11, a patrol from Company A 378th Infantry moved out from Wadgassen^o with the mission of taking a prisoner in Spurk.^o The patrol encountered barbed wire around the house which was its objective, but members of the patrol cut their way through it. Two guards had been stationed outside the house by the Germans, but one of them was captured as he returned after going to awaken his relief. Before the patrol left, a charge of dynamite was placed against the building, but it failed to explode. The night of January 12-13, a combat patrol of platoon strength was sent into Spurk. Three houses were located which were occupied by Germans, two of the houses having machine guns emplaced in them. The patrol blew up the three houses by placing dynamite charges in the doorways and around the houses. It was estimated that seven enemy had been killed and 15 wounded, while the 378th Infantry patrol lost one killed, one missing and four wounded. The same night, two reconnaissance patrols, each consisting of one squad, were sent to reconnoiter the Schaffhausen^o area; known enemy positions were confirmed and the patrols returned without incident.

There remains the story of the Division as a whole, and for the period from December 22 through January 29 this is primarily concerned with the Saarlautern bridgehead. Shortly after the relief of the 5th Division, General Twaddle ordered that a limited objective attack be made by the 377th and the 379th Infantry Regiments in the bridgehead December 24, and limited objective attacks were to play an important part in the aggressive defense conducted by the Division. The two regiments, less those elements necessary for the



A sidelight of war: Two Division doughboys prepare a rabbit for supper.

close-in protection of the captured bridge, were to launch limited objective attacks at 0830 to kill or capture the enemy. The attack was to continue until 1730, and beginning at 1800 the attacking forces were to be withdrawn under cover of fire from supporting weapons. The attack jumped off on schedule, and in the left sector the 379th Infantry met only light small arms and mortar fire. By 1600, both battalions, the 1st and the 3rd, had taken their objectives, and the withdrawal to the original positions was effected successfully. It was estimated that 23 enemy had been killed and 55 wounded; seven prisoners were taken. In the 377th sector, in Fraulautern, the attack was made by only two companies, B and L. Resistance was initially more stubborn than that met by the 379th Infantry, but by noon the attack was progressing rapidly. At 1400 it was necessary to hold up while Germans who had infiltrated behind Company L were cleaned out, but by 1730 the objectives had been reached and the withdrawal was effected without incident. Seven Germans had been killed, an estimated 20 wounded and one prisoner was taken.

Christmas Day was relatively quiet, although the 379th Infantry engaged in some very active counter-propaganda. The story is best told in the words of the report made by Colonel Bacon^o to General Twaddle:^o

"On 24 December 1944, in mid-afternoon, a German force in Beckingen^o on the east bank of the Saar River made a broadcast to Company L of this regiment (which was) holding Rehlingen^o on the west bank of the Saar River. The broadcast invited our troops to cross the river the following day and join our German friends for Christmas dinner. That night, we thought that rather than deplete their food supply the next day it might be better to add a little spice to their meal with the addition of some twisted steel.

"Our part in the festivities was planned as follows: A news broadcast to include a partial list of their successes in the counter-offensive, in the midst of which our announcer would interrupt and on the dot of 1200 deposit some of the following on the heads of the merry Jerries: 13 heavy machine guns—250 rounds apiece; nine .50-caliber machine guns—200 rounds apiece; six 60-millimeter mortars—three rounds apiece; three 81-millimeter mortars—three rounds apiece; two 37-millimeter guns—10 rounds apiece; 12 105-millimeter guns—four rounds apiece; four 155-millimeter howitzers—three rounds apiece; four 155-millimeter guns—five rounds apiece; two eight-inch howitzers—four rounds apiece; and two 240-millimeter howitzers—four rounds apiece.

"It was estimated that one German company occupied Beckingen^o before this barrage and considerably less than that afterwards.

Casualties are not known but ambulance activity in the town upon completion of the firing attests to the effectiveness of the fire. One deterrent to the plan was the failure of the loud speaking system to operate. It is felt that this would have been a distinct aid, but the artillery observers in their observation posts felt that the fires could hardly have been more devastating."

General Twaddle^o directed that aggressive patrolling be carried on in the bridgehead during the daylight hours of December 26 with the mission of keeping the enemy off balance and capturing the maximum number of prisoners. In Fraulautern, a 1st Battalion 377th Infantry patrol met little resistance and found the enemy line lightly held, but the 3rd Battalion patrol found its sector well defended with almost every house occupied by Germans. The 379th Infantry patrols in Saarlautern-Roden encountered heavy small arms fire and discovered that the Germans had reoccupied the ground seized temporarily during the limited objective attack of December 24.

It appeared that the limited objective attack and the continued patrols had taken the initiative away from the Germans, for the enemy defense became more passive and there was no repetition of the aggressive patrolling of December 22-23. However, for the first time in the Division's combat experience, the German air force appeared in some strength in the Division sector. On December 25, reports were received of 38 planes in the area, and the units of the 547th A.A.A. Battalion claimed one certainly destroyed and three possibly destroyed German aircraft. The following day, 22 planes were engaged and two were damaged. Enemy air activity then slackened for several days. On December 29, the Luftwaffe appeared again and the Division forward echelon was hit by fighter bombers. Six planes approached Boulay^o from the northeast at approximately 10,000 feet. Two of the planes peeled off into a shallow dive which brought them down to 4,000 feet; they released their 500-pound bombs and circled back into formation. Then two more attacked. Finally, several planes strafed the area. There were no Division casualties. Five of the planes were captured American P-47's and one was a Messerschmitt 109. Of the P-47's, all but one bore conventional United States markings; the one exception had a white cross superimposed on an orange letter in place of the American white star. The same day, the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion reported that four P-47's strafed the town of Merlebach^o near the Division's right boundary, and dropped two bombs on a factory there.

On December 31, the Division launched another limited objective attack in the bridgehead area. Again the 379th and the 377th Infantry Regiments participated. In Saarlautern-Roden, the 379th Infan-

try attacked with the 3rd Battalion on the left and the 1st Battalion on the right. The 3rd Battalion met little resistance and took its objective by 1300. The 1st Battalion met heavy small arms and rocket fire and by evening had taken approximately half of its objective. In Fraulautern, the 377th Infantry met little resistance. The 1st Battalion on the left pushed forward with Company B to its objective and took 17 prisoners. The 3rd Battalion, on the right, attacked with Companies I and K. No opposition was encountered, and even though the attacking companies pushed out beyond their objective no prisoners were taken. In contrast to the attack of December 24, the objectives on December 31 were consolidated and held.

New Year's Eve began with rumors of an impending German attack. A prisoner had been captured by the 106th Cavalry Group (the unit to the right of the 95th Division and on the extreme left of XV Corps), and the prisoner declared that the Germans would attack that night against the left of the 106th Cavalry Group and would possibly effect a penetration of the 95th Division zone. Initially, the Germans would employ only a single company without artillery support, but the force might be increased when the direction of the attack had been determined. The predicted attack was launched shortly before midnight along a wide front from Bous,^o a mile northeast of Wadgassen,^o to Petite Roselle,^o six miles to the southeast. An estimated 2,000 Germans took part in the operation, and the attack was supported by large amounts of artillery. Before dawn, the enemy had sent elements across the 95th Division boundary in the Wadgassen^o-Spurk^o area, and to the south the Germans held Werbeln^o and the high ground north of Ludweiler-Warndt.

From the time of the first reports of the attack, the 95th Division command groups followed the developments closely. Liaison was maintained with the 106th Cavalry Group commander, and the seriousness of the situation was soon apparent. At 2350 December 31, the cavalry group requested that the 5th Ranger Battalion be sent to the center of their zone; the battalion was informed by Division of the request and was directed to be prepared to move if necessary. At 0245 January 1, the commanding officer of the cavalry group reported that his entire left flank was being pushed back and the right flank of the 95th Division was being uncovered. At this time, General Twaddle^o directed Colonel Metcalfe,^o if in his judgment it was necessary, to move his 2nd Battalion with an attached platoon of medium tanks to meet the threatening penetration of the 106th Cavalry Group sector. At 0305, Colonel Metcalfe^o was directed to alert the entire 378th Infantry and was informed that he would be given trucks to

motorize an additional battalion.¹ Shortly after 0245, Colonel Metcalfe^o issued a warning order to the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry for possible employment in the Spürk^o-Hostenbach^o-Ludweiler^o area, and shortly after 0305 he alerted the 2nd Battalion for employment as a counterattacking force, the 1st Battalion for movement from Falck^o to Ueberherrn^o and the 3rd Battalion for movement from Coume^o to Falck^o. Through liaison with the commanding officer of the 106th Cavalry Group, Colonel Metcalfe^o learned that the cavalry was falling back in a disorganized manner and had lost contact with the enemy. He issued the following order to Major Robert E. Adair,^o then commanding the 2nd Battalion, at 0415:

"The 106th Cavalry Group informs me that they do not know the present whereabouts or composition of enemy forces, but it is believed that the enemy has advanced as far west as Differten^o and may be continuing his westward movement. The liaison officer from Troop A 106th Cavalry Squadron informs me that an unknown number of troops from Troop A are now in Friedrichweiler^o reorganizing. They will precede your battalion, contact the enemy, and upon your arrival in Friedrichweiler,^o the troop commander will inform you of the enemy situation.

The 2nd Battalion with attachments will move on the route Ueberherrn^o-Friedrichweiler^o-Differten^o-Werbeln^o-Schaffhausen^o-Hostenbach^o and will destroy the enemy or drive him to the east bank of the Saar River. The 1st and 3rd battalions are being moved into assembly areas in this vicinity to reinforce your attack if necessary. The entire 778th Tank Battalion has been placed at my disposal, and additional tanks are available to support your attack if needed."

The 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry had been located in Ueberherrn^o since December 23, and there had been ample opportunity for reconnaissance of the area through which the Germans were now attacking; this had been accomplished not only by the battalion commander and his staff but also by company and platoon leaders. In addition, constant liaison had been maintained with the 106th Cavalry Group. When the warning order was received, Major Adair^o discussed plans for the employment of the battalion with his staff, and when the alert order was received he assembled his company and attached unit commanders. At 0445 he issued the following orders:

"The enemy is believed to hold Differten^o and may still be moving

¹At this time, the 378th Infantry had its 1st Battalion in Falck;^o the 2nd Battalion was motorized in Ueberherrn;^o and the 3rd Battalion was in Coume.^o The regiment was in Division reserve, but plans had been made that on January 1 the 1st Battalion would relieve the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry in Lisdorf^o and the 3rd Battalion was to move to the bridgehead to be attached to the 379th Infantry.

west. Strength and composition of the enemy forces are not known. The 1st and 3rd battalions are moving to this general area to be available for employment to reinforce our attack.

"This battalion will move along the route Friedrichweiler^o-Differ-ten^o-Werbeln^o-Schaffhausen^o-Hostenbach,^o and force the enemy across the Saar River. Elements of Troop A 106th Cavalry Squadron will precede our move, contact the enemy and report to me as I pass through Friedrichweiler.^o

"The battalion will move in a route column in the following order of march: Company G, advance guard, with 2nd platoon Company B 778th Tank Battalion, one section of heavy machine guns, one section of 81-millimeter mortars and the battalion antitank platoon attached. The main body will consist of Company F, Battalion Headquarters Company, Company H less attachments, regimental anti-tank platoon, and Company E, less the one platoon which is now in Wadgassen.^o Company F will provide flank security for the main body; Company E will provide the rear guard. The platoon of Company E now in Wadgassen^o will withdraw to the high ground 1,000 yards west of the town and will take up a defensive position there. The cannon platoon will move to previously reconnoitered positions west of Friedrichweiler^o at 0515. This movement will be covered by elements of the 106th Cavalry Group now located in Friedrichweiler.^o

"Artillery supporting fires will be provided by the 284th Field Artillery Battalion reinforced by the 204th Field Artillery Battalion. One forward observer will accompany the advance guard. One forward observer is at present with the platoon of Company E in Wadgassen^o and will remain with the platoon.

"The initial point will be the crossroads 300 yards north of the command post. Company G will cross the initial point at 0530. Radio silence will be observed until contact is made with the enemy. I will be at the head of the main body. It is now 0445. Are there any questions?"

The 2nd Battalion moved out of Ueberherrn^o at 0530 and reached Friedrichweiler at 0630. No troops of the 106th Cavalry Group were found in Friedrichweiler,^o and the 2nd Battalion continued alone toward Differten.^o The road at this point led into a deep valley, and the battalion commander directed a platoon of Company F to move out to the high ground southeast of Differten to protect the battalion's flank. Differten^o was entered and found clear of enemy. At 0720, the point and the advance party moved out of Differten^o and immediately came under intense small arms and machine gun fire from Werbeln^o and from the woods to the south. Nevertheless, they fought their way into the western edge of the town, while the main

body made a temporary halt. The battalion commander made a reconnaissance from the eastern edge of Differten^o and then issued the following orders:

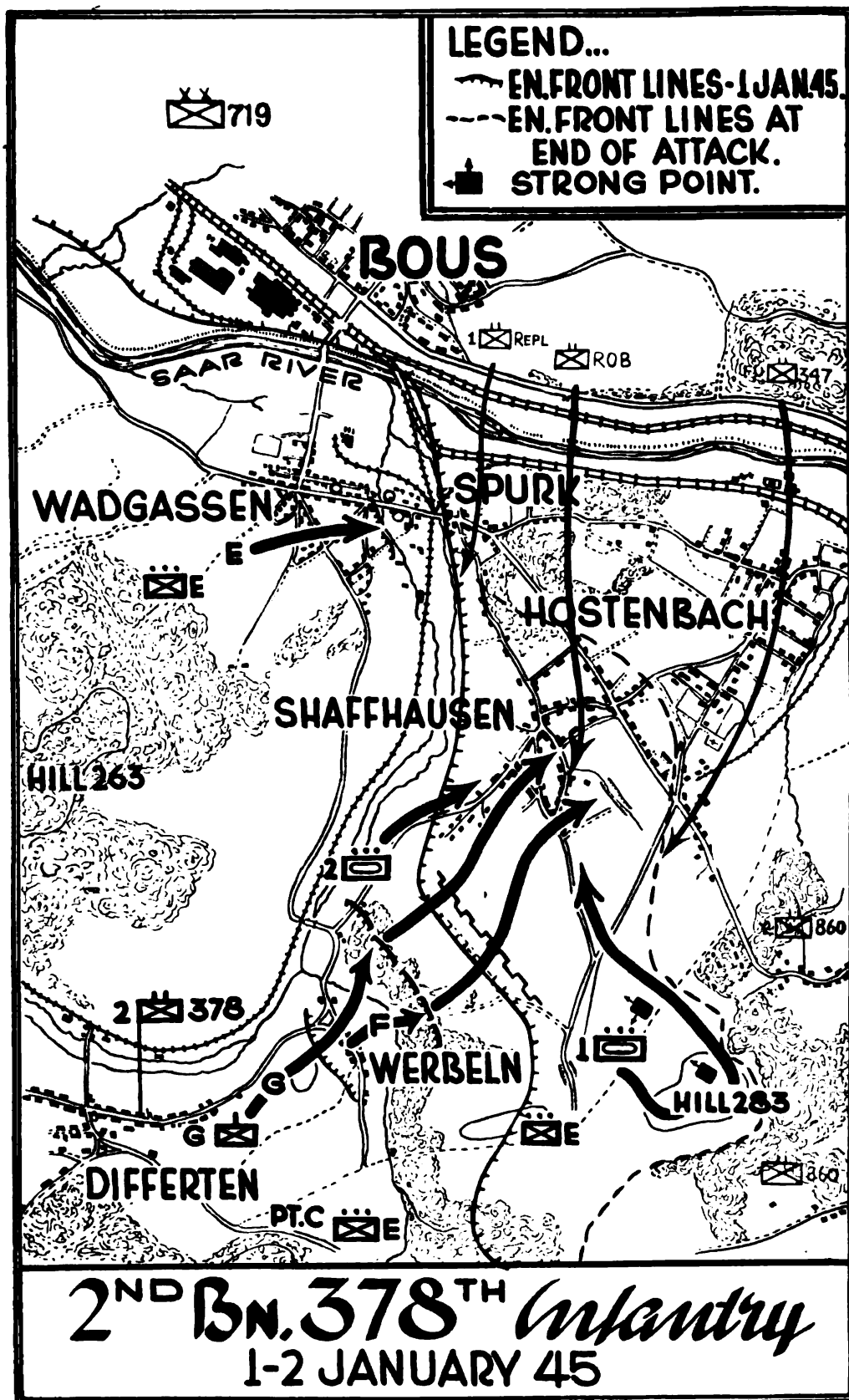
"The point and the advance party have contacted the enemy in Werbeln and are receiving intense mortar and small arms fire. Company G will send one platoon to seize and hold the high ground southeast of Differten^o until relieved by the flank platoon of Company F. When relieved, the platoon of Company G will move south of and parallel to the main road from Differten^o to Werbeln,^o clearing the high ground and woods in their zone as far as Werbeln.^o One squad of Company E will proceed along the high ground on our left flank to a position overlooking Werbeln^o from the northwest. Company G will attack as soon as possible, clear the town of Werbeln^o and seize the high ground immediately east of the town. As soon as the squad of Company E arrives in position and the Company G platoon clears the woods and high ground south of the road, the tanks will proceed and assist Company G. Company F is to follow Company G into Werbeln,^o occupy the south portion of the town and outpost the high ground to the south and southeast. Company E will remain in Differten^o as battalion reserve and will relieve the platoon of Company F on the high ground southeast of Differten.^o Eighty-one-millimeter mortars will be set up in battery in this vicinity and be prepared to support the Company G attack on call. My command post will be here."

The operation was carried out as planned. Company G cleared Werbeln^o against light resistance and by 1230 had moved to positions on the high ground northeast of the town. The battalion was receiving some small arms fire from the woods southeast of Werbeln,^o and a platoon of Company F was directed to clear these woods and take up positions to the right of Company G. The mission was accomplished by 1430.

At 1515, orders were received from regiment to attack Schaffhausen^o that day. At the same time, an additional platoon of tanks was attached to the 2nd Battalion. Major Adair^o immediately directed Company F to place another platoon in position to the right of Company G and to prepare to continue the attack. At 1540, the following battalion order was issued:

"An estimated 300 enemy is entrenched on the high ground east of our present positions. There are two fortified positions located approximately 1,500 yards to the southeast of our present positions. The enemy dispositions in Schaffhausen^o are unknown.

"We have contacted elements of the 106th Cavalry Group on our right flank. They do not plan to attack today.



"This battalion will continue the attack, pass over the high ground and seize and hold the town of Schaffhausen.^o The line of departure is the present front line.

"Company G will attack with its left flank guiding on the Werbeln-Schaffhausen^o road and take that portion of Schaffhausen^o astride this road.

"Company F will guide on the right flank of Company G and seize the southwestern portion of Schaffhausen.^o It will consolidate positions there and await further orders.

"Company E will move to Werbeln,^o remaining in battalion reserve, and will outpost the high ground to the south and southeast, maintaining contact with the 106th Cavalry Group to our south. The Company E platoon on the high ground west of Wadgassen^o will re-enter the town and occupy its former position.

"The 81-millimeter mortars from present positions in Werbeln will support the attack by observed fires placed 200 yards in front of the advancing infantry.

"One platoon of heavy machine guns will be placed on the south flank and one on the north flank of present positions and will support the attack with observed fires.

"The regimental antitank platoon will take positions guarding the southern approaches to Werbeln.^o The battalion antitank platoon will take positions guarding the northeastern approaches to Werbeln.^o

"The two tank platoons will move along the Werbeln^o-Schaffhausen^o road until they reach the hilltop. The first platoon of tanks will then move southeast to the vicinity of the two fortifications, neutralizing them and thus protecting the right flank of the attacking infantry. The first platoon of tanks, after accomplishing this mission, will move into Schaffhausen^o and support the attack of Company F. The second platoon of tanks from positions near the road will cover the attack of the first tank platoon and then support the attack of the infantry on Schaffhausen.^o It will then move into Schaffhausen^o and assist Company G in clearing its portion of the town. The tank attack will precede the infantry by 10 minutes and will be covered by artillery time-fire.

"Artillery preparations of time-fire lasting 15 minutes will precede the infantry attack and at 1630 will shift into the forward edge of Schaffhausen.^o At 1635 all artillery fires will lift.

"The line of departure is the present front lines. The time for the infantry attack is 1630. My command post will be here in Werbeln^o and later in the first house along the road into Schaffhausen."^o

The artillery fires and the tank attack preceded the infantry attack as had been planned. The tanks moved out to the southeast, neu-

tralized the fortifications which had been assigned them as objectives and protected the flank of the advancing infantry. The tank tactics evidently confused the enemy and misled the Germans with respect to the direction of the main attack; a large amount of artillery was directed against the area of the tank operations while the infantry was moving toward Schaffhausen.^o

The infantry attacked at 1630, using marching fire and supported by a base of fire from the heavy machine guns and tanks. The marching fire effectively neutralized the small arms fire of the enemy, and 72 Germans were overrun and captured in the trench system before Schaffhausen.^o However, heavy casualties were suffered by the battalion troops from an enemy artillery concentration which hit them just before they entered Schaffhausen.^o Nevertheless, the infantry, accompanied by tanks, assaulted the town, and by 1645 the western edge of the town had been cleared. Schaffhausen^o was heavily defended; the streets were covered by small arms and machine gun fire, and the German artillery had by now shifted its fire and was directing heavy concentrations against the part of town in which the Americans were operating. Progress was slow in bitter house-to-house fighting, but by 1900 the western block of the town was in American hands and 38 prisoners had been taken. At this time, the battalion received an order originating from Division which directed it to withdraw under cover of darkness to Differten.^o The withdrawal was begun at 1930. First, the bulk of the troops were pulled back, leaving only a covering shell; then the covering force was withdrawn. Not a single casualty was suffered during the execution of this maneuver and no one was left behind. By 2300 the battalion, with the exception of two platoons of Company E, had closed into Differten.^o One platoon of Company E was outpostting Werbeln^o and another remained in Wadgassen.^o During the day, the 2nd Battalion had captured 122 prisoners, killed an estimated 175 Germans and wounded 115; it had suffered 50 casualties, including three company commanders.

During the night of January 1-2, orders were received to re-enter the town of Schaffhausen^o at 0730 in conjunction with an attack by the 106th Cavalry Group. The 2nd Battalion attack order was as follows:

"The enemy situation is unchanged. The 106th Cavalry attacks at 0730 on our right flank. This battalion will attack and clear the portion of Schaffhausen^o west of the main north-south road, consolidate positions there and prepare to send patrols to Spurk^o and Hostenbach.^o

"Company F will move out at 0700, clear the woods east of Werbeln

and outpost the high ground along yesterday's line of departure.

"Company G, with one section of heavy machine guns attached, will move into Werbeln^o following Company F.

"Company E will remain in Differten^o as battalion reserve and will outpost the high ground south of the town.

"At 0730, the first platoon of tanks will leave Differten^o, pass through Company G in Werbeln^o and execute a maneuver similar to that of yesterday. After arriving in position, they will fire on the southern portion of Schaffhausen^o. Closely following the tanks, Company G will move rapidly along the main road from Werbeln to Schaffhausen^o. The movement of Company G will be by infiltrating platoons. The first platoon of tanks, after executing the diversionary maneuver, will move into Schaffhausen following Company G. The second platoon of tanks will remain in battalion reserve in Differten^o. The commanding officer of Company G will be in command of all elements fighting in Schaffhausen^o. Company F will be prepared to dispatch platoons to occupy portions of Schaffhausen^o cleared by Company G.

"My command post will be in Werbeln."^o

The attack of the 106th Cavalry Group did not materialize until late afternoon, but in other respects the operation developed as planned. Company F moved out of Differten^o at 0700, and by 0830 it had outposted the woods east of Werbeln^o. The tanks began their diversionary attack at 0730, and the maneuver was accomplished without incident. At 0735, the leading platoon of Company G moved rapidly over the open ground along the road and entered the western edge of Schaffhausen^o without encountering the enemy. At 0815, the first platoon of tanks entered Schaffhausen^o and assisted the infantry in clearing the town. All of Company G was in Schaffhausen^o by 0830 and had begun the slow work of clearing the town by house-to-house fighting. The battalion reserve was moved to Werbeln^o at 0955; at 1000 the G Company commander requested a platoon of Company F and by 1100 Company F had closed into Schaffhausen^o.

The remainder of the day was consumed in the slow clearing of the town; by 1600 the objective had been reached, and by 1700 all bypassed pockets of resistance had been reduced. At this time the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry was notified that the 106th Cavalry Group would assume responsibility for Schaffhausen^o beginning the night of January 2-3. Two platoons of the cavalry group arrived in Schaffhausen^o at 1815 to relieve the 2nd Battalion. At 1845, Major Adair^o issued orders for the withdrawal, and at 2230 the 2nd Battalion had closed in at Ueberherrn^o.

From the prisoners captured during the operation it was possible to gain a clear picture of the German side of the two day engagement.

The attack was to have been part of a New Year's demonstration for Hitler in which all units in Germany were to participate. In the sector with which the 95th Division was concerned, Spurk^o was taken by the 1st Company (80 men) of the 347th Replacement Battalion. To the south of Spurk, an officer candidate battalion known as Battalion ROB (160 men) and the 347th Fusilier Battalion (400 men) captured Hostenbach,^o Schaffhausen^o and Werbeln.^o Further to the south were other units of the 347th Infantry Division. The German units on the 95th Division front lost heavily, suffering an estimated 400 casualties, most of whom came from the officer candidate battalion and from the 347th Fusilier Battalion. Prisoners captured some time after the attack gave information which made it probable that, had their initial advance succeeded, the Germans were prepared immediately to commit more units and to expand the offensive at least to Division size; the quick and violent reaction of the 95th Division to the danger on its flank had soon discouraged such optimistic plans.

During the two days of the counterattack, January 1 and 2, there was little enemy activity, except for the Luftwaffe, on the rest of the Division front. On January 1, an estimated 30 planes, 29 Messerschmitt 109's and one JU-88, strafed and bombed command posts, gun positions, roads and towns in the Division area with negligible damage. Four planes were claimed destroyed and six damaged. On January 2, about the same number of planes appeared in the Division area. On January 3, enemy air activity stopped completely, and for the rest of the month German planes operated in the Division area only in isolated instances.

On January 1-2, the relief of the 377th Infantry in the bridgehead and at Lisdorf was effected by the 378th and 379th Infantry Regiments. The relief of the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry by the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry at Lisdorf^o was temporarily delayed by the counterattack on the right flank, but it was completed without incident the evening of January 2.

From January 3 to January 20, when the Germans again counter-attacked, this time in the bridgehead, the enemy maintained a decidedly passive defense. A few small reconnaissance patrols were sent out daily, and very light small arms, mortar and artillery fire would be directed against Division troops. During this period, the 95th Division continued its maneuvers to keep the Germans off balance. On January 5, another limited objective attack was launched by the 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry and the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry. On the left in Saarlautern-Roden, the 379th Infantry ran into heavy small arms and Panzerfaust fire. Tanks were brought forward, but it proved impossible to provide them with adequate fields of fire with-

out preliminary clearing away of rubble and tearing down of buildings. The 378th Infantry, on the right, found its advance blocked by a large pillbox on the right flank. A public address system, demolitions and a 90-millimeter gun were all used without success. The attacking forces were withdrawn toward evening, after each battalion had captured a few houses and taken several prisoners. On January 6, the bridgehead forces attempted a new maneuver, a feinted withdrawal to trap German patrols. All troops remained quiet through the day and no shots were fired. In the afternoon, the enemy dispatched a single bicyclist into the bridgehead area, and when he was unmolested a patrol was sent into the 379th Infantry area. The results of the feinted withdrawal were seven easily captured prisoners and considerable German confusion. During the next days, the bridgehead forces resumed aggressive patrolling, and, on January 14, the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry and the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry launched a limited objective attack. Both battalions successfully reached their objectives. On January 17, the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry, located in Lisdorf,^o feinted a crossing of the Saar in an attempt to locate the German artillery and mortar fires which would be directed against such a crossing. However, the enemy reacted only with small arms and machine gun fire.

During this period, as noted above, the Germans remained quiet in the Division sector. On January 18, however, enemy activity in the Saarlautern bridgehead indicated that the Germans were making preparations for an attack in the near future. At this time, the 377th Infantry held responsibility for the bridgehead and the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry was attached to it. In the bridgehead, the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry was on the left in Saarlautern-Roden, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry was on the right in Fraulautern and the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry was in reserve near the bridge.

The first indication of a change in the enemy attitude of passive defense was the increase of German propaganda broadcasts. Throughout the day of January 18, American music was played almost continuously, interspersed with demands for surrender. During the night of January 18-19, a 15-man patrol infiltrated into the 377th lines, passing through the front at the weak point near the boundary between the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry and the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry. At this point there were few buildings, and the area was covered largely by mines and by fire from the adjoining sectors. The patrol was taken under fire by Company L, the right company of the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry. One officer and four men were killed but the rest escaped. The dead were searched for identifi-

cations without success, and it was evident that the enemy was taking unusual security precautions.

Early the afternoon of January 19, a Company L outpost observed another enemy patrol, this time of 24 men, moving toward its sector. The strange tactics of the Germans indicated both that they were inexperienced troops and that they were unfamiliar with the terrain and the situation. When it was first sighted, the patrol was moving forward in a column of twos; small arms and automatic weapons opened fire when it came within range, and several of the enemy were immediately killed or wounded. The remainder attempted singly or in small groups to enter a house near the Company L outpost. First, four of the enemy made a dash for the house, and all were killed by BAR fire. A German machine gunner tried to evade the American fire by running with frequent changes of direction; he was killed by a rifle shot. A minute later, another German reached the house, but he was completely winded and was shot as he paused at the entrance. Finally, several Germans succeeded in gaining the shelter of the house. Company L aggressively attempted to dislodge them, and the struggle continued throughout the afternoon. Three more Germans were killed, and at dusk the remainder fled.

Other enemy patrols were also active on January 19 in the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry sector, and it was evident that the Germans were preparing an offensive operation in the near future. Accordingly, steps were taken both by the 3rd Battalion commander and by Colonel Gaillard^o to strengthen the line at its weakest point. Elements of Company I were moved behind Company L to give a better defense in depth. An additional minefield was laid and booby-trapped behind the original one, which the Germans had now located. Both the 81-millimeter mortars and the 60-millimeter mortars of the 3rd Battalion were zeroed in on targets in the probable area of attack and new fire plans arranged. In addition, the 1st Battalion mortars were zeroed in by 3rd Battalion observers, and telephone and radio communications were improved. Finally, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry added one section of 81-millimeter mortars and one section of heavy machine guns to protect the weak point in the lines. The final warning of the attack was received from two prisoners captured at 1900 by Company K, on the left of the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry. The prisoners had heard of an attack to be launched sometime during the night of January 19-20 and probably just before dawn. All the bridgehead units were informed of this report, and they remained on the alert and prepared.

At 0500 January 20, enemy patrols began to infiltrate into the 377th Infantry area. The maneuver was carried out skillfully, and the

377th Infantry was able only to keep careful track of them so that they might be searched out at daylight. At 0600, a tremendous artillery and mortar barrage was thrown into both the 3rd Battalion 377th area and the 2nd Battalion 378th area. Between 0600 and 0620 it was estimated that 2,000 rounds fell in the two areas, and at the same time counter-battery fire was directed against American artillery in Alt-Forweiler^o and Beaumarais.^o At 0620, the artillery was shifted back of the American lines to the Saarlautern bridge area, and the attack began against the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry.

The Germans advanced boldly and openly down the streets toward the American forces. They were allowed to advance to the defensive fire zone, and here they were met with intense small arms and automatic weapons fire. At the same time, the prepared mortar fires were begun, with the 3rd Battalion firing into one sector and the 1st Battalion into another. The 920th Field Artillery Battalion and the 377th Infantry Regiment's Cannon Company were firing on call, and eventually the fire of five battalions of artillery was being directed against the counterattack.

The attack continued in full force for about 45 minutes, and it was estimated that the enemy employed 400 to 500 infantry supported by two tanks and by three or more assault guns. For a short period, the situation was extremely fluid. Not only had German patrols infiltrated through the 3rd Battalion lines at dawn but elements of the main force were also able to break through, and at one time the 3rd Battalion was entirely surrounded. Soon, however, the Germans became disorganized as a result of the heavy casualties which the Division fires, and in particular those of the artillery, were inflicting on them; most of the leaders had been killed or wounded and those who remained were incapable of fighting a coordinated action. Meanwhile, the Division had been mobilizing additional forces for use against the attack. A platoon of medium tanks was ordered to move to Saarlautern for attachment to the 377th Infantry. The 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry, in mobile reserve at Ueberherrn,^o was alerted for possible movement to the bridgehead. In the bridgehead area, a platoon of Company C was sent forward to assist the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry. However, the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry, with the aid of its supporting artillery, was able to hold its lines against the German attack and to break up the organization of the attacking force. By the middle of the morning, the enemy thrust had lost its momentum, and the small groups which had passed through the American lines were being slowly destroyed. To the right of the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry was harassed by a series of strong combat patrols with an estimated total

strength of 150. The Germans were able to seize two outpost positions, but they could not penetrate the main lines and by the end of the morning all the German patrols had been repulsed with heavy losses.

The Germans had attacked to regain the Saarlautern bridgehead, and they had paid a high price to gain nothing. Of the 400 to 500 men used against the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry, more than half were lost, and of the 150 sent against the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, an estimated 50 became casualties. From prisoners it was determined that the main force employed had received a month's special training in town fighting. Numerous flame-throwers were to be employed in the attack, but, while a large number were captured, on only two occasions did the enemy make use of them.

Once the main attack had been repulsed, Company I, assisted by the platoon of Company C, began mopping up operations to clean out the Germans behind the American lines, and this would not be completed until January 21. In the early evening of January 20, Company L profited by the German disorganization to attack two strongpoints to its immediate front. The enemy was taken by surprise, and a number of prisoners were easily captured. At midnight, the Germans made another attempt to penetrate the 3rd Battalion lines, this time on the left in the Company K sector. Two groups of platoon size were employed. The first tried to move down the railroad tracks, but Company K had three machine guns covering the area. The group was dispersed, and the next morning 15 German dead were seen along the tracks. The second group worked its way through the center of the company line and successfully occupied several buildings to the rear. The next morning, Company K, with the aid of a tank destroyer, recaptured the buildings and killed or captured the entire attacking group.

On January 21 the 377th Infantry continued mopping-up operations in the bridgehead area, and by evening the sector was clear. To its right, the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry launched a limited objective attack at 0745. The advance was rapid at first against only small arms and machine gun fire. At 1000 the left company was held up by a pillbox, but a tank was brought forward and the pillbox reduced. Thirteen prisoners were taken before the battalion returned to its original position.

It had been originally planned that the 379th Infantry would relieve the 377th Infantry in the bridgehead area the night of January 21-22. The relief was begun at this time, but the German attack had brought the lines so close together that the execution of the relief was delayed and it was only completed the night of January 22-23. In the 3rd

Battalion 377th Infantry sector, the Germans managed to gain possession of a flour mill before the relief from the 1st Battalion 379th Infantry reached the building. Consequently, when the 2nd platoon of Company C moved forward to occupy the mill the night of January 22-23, it was met with intense small arms and Panzerfaust fire. Since the mill was in a commanding position with wide fields of fire, it was essential that it be recaptured and a platoon of Company A was attached to Company C for the operation. Two squads of Company A made the initial attack; they were able to gain entrance to the mill, but the Germans had littered the floor with Schu-mines and had occupied strong second-floor positions from which they were able to drop grenades on the Company A men. Thirteen casualties were suffered by the two attacking squads and they withdrew. Three attempts were made in the next two days to retake the mill but all failed. Meanwhile, supporting weapons had fired a tremendous number of rounds into the building. These included 200 rounds from a 57-millimeter antitank gun, 75 rounds from a 75-millimeter tank gun, more than 100 rounds from a 90-millimeter tank destroyer and several thousand rounds from .50-caliber machine guns; at night bazooka men moved close to the mill and fired white phosphorus rounds into it in an unsuccessful attempt to burn it. Finally, on January 26, entrance to the mill was once more gained by a night attack, and the Germans withdrew shortly afterwards.

On January 25, it was discovered that the Germans were conducting extensive mining operations to the Division's front, and it was clear that the disastrous counterattack of January 20 had convinced them that the course of wisdom was to remain on the defensive and to let well enough alone. On the same day, the 95th Division received warning orders of its impending relief by the 26th Infantry Division.

The Division's tactical operations in the Saar have been described, but there remains another phase of the Division's activity, military government, which became of considerable importance with the entrance into Germany and which may be briefly summarized here. Not only was it necessary to make and enforce regulations designed to protect American troops against espionage and irregular behind-the-lines activity, but in many cases the Division was compelled to assume temporary responsibility for the maintenance of the civil administration and the essential economy. This work was carried on by the civil affairs (or G-5) section and the counter-intelligence team at Division level and at a lower level all Division units participated.

When the 95th Division entered Germany November 29, it moved into an area from which large numbers of the residents had been evacuated by the German government and where only 30 per cent

of the normal population remained. Military government proclamations were immediately posted which contained not only the general rules governing the behavior of civilians but also definite regulations on such subjects as blackout hours and travel restrictions. Roadblocks were set up by Division troops outside the villages to control the movement of German civilians, and special patrols were sent out at night to check for lights. Where it was necessary to quarter American troops in a town still containing Germans, an attempt was made to segregate the two groups; at Ueberherrn,^o for example, the area north of the railroad was assigned to civilians and that south of it to Division troops. Finally, even at this early stage, the problem of the displaced person (DP's) appeared, although they were not yet met in the astronomical numbers to be found later, for example, in the Ruhr. However, between November 29 and December 3 the following displaced persons were sent to a collecting point for eventual movement to their homelands: 72 Russians, 38 Poles, 14 Italians, seven Greeks, six Serbians and one Belgian.

In addition, in some cases it was necessary to move food from one town or warehouse where it was more plentiful to another where it was lacking. Medical supplies were issued in cases of necessity. In general, the electrical systems were damaged beyond repair, but in most cases the water system could be restored at least in part and plumbers were put to work under the supervision of military government officials.

A special situation existed in Lisdorf^o where Major John A. Reilly^o was forced to undertake the supervision of approximately 1,000 Germans who had sought shelter in an air raid bunker. The bunker had been constructed by the Germans in 1942 with an intended capacity of 600; it was built into a hill, and contained two large rooms and two smaller ones. There was only an American observation post between the bunker and the German lines, and since the area was under constant shell fire, it was impossible to evacuate the occupants. When American troops discovered the bunker December 3, the thousand Germans had already been living in it for a week, conditions were excessively crowded, food and water were poor and inadequate, and sanitary conditions were non-existent.

Major Reilly^o arranged for the thorough cleaning of the bunker and for the digging of latrines at each end. A community kitchen was organized with a special kitchen for small children and the ill, and daily foraging parties were sent out for food and water (at first, water could be obtained from pumps 200 yards away, but artillery soon destroyed these and it was necessary to go almost 500 yards). Medical care was provided by two German doctors assisted by eight

nuns, and certain essential medical supplies were given them.

The entire group remained in the bunker until January 11, when the greatest portion were evacuated to Ueberherrn,^o Berus^o and Alt-Forweiler;^o on January 19, the bunker was evacuated completely. Meanwhile, with the aid of volunteer workers, two workshops had been set up in Lisdorf, one for the making of candles and with a capacity of over 1,000 a day, and the other for the making of snow-suits necessary for winter camouflage. Both operations were transferred to Ueberherrn^o January 19.

When the Division, on December 22, reoccupied the bridgehead area and undertook the holding of a defensive Saar line, military government officials, on the direction of General Twaddle,^o evacuated a number of German towns near the Saar and moved the civilians to certain selected points further to the rear. Before the end of the month, almost 4,000 Germans had been evacuated, and the following towns were empty of civilians: Saarlautern, Neu-Forweiler,^o Alt-Forweiler,^o Wallerfangen, Bueren^o (here 970 German civilians were removed from a large cave), Siersdorf,^o Ober-Limberg,^o Ober-Felsberg,^o Felsberg,^o Unter-Felsberg, Berus^o and Pikard.^o The evacuees were taken to Ueberherrn,^o Ihn^o and Kerprich-Hemmersdorf.^o As a result, the Division had a zone along the Saar clear of enemy civilians, and the Germans in the Division zone were concentrated in a few towns and could be more easily controlled. In January, the same general policies were carried out, but it was found possible to allow the citizens of several evacuated towns to return to their homes, and as a result the crowded conditions in Ueberherrn,^o Ihn^o and Kerprich-Hemmersdorf^o were alleviated. Throughout the period of its military government in the Saar, the Division encountered no direct opposition, and the German attitude is perhaps best described as cooperative and undemonstrative.

Epilogue to the Saar—In VIII Corps Reserve in Belgium

The Division, when relieved by the 26th Infantry Division, was to be transferred from the XX Corps to the VIII Corps and was directed to prepare for movement to an assembly area in the vicinity of Bastogne,^o Belgium. The advance party left for the new area January 26, and the relief of the 95th Division by the 26th Division in the Saar began January 28. On January 29 the relief was completed and at 2400 command passed to the commanding general of the 26th Division.¹ For the first time since October 20, the 95th Division was out of contact with the enemy.

¹The following units were relieved of attachment to the 95th Division at this time: 778th Tank Battalion, 5th Ranger Battalion and Companies A and D of the 81st Chemical Mortar Battalion.

On the day the Division left the XX Corps, the Corps commanding general, General Walker,^o addressed the following commendation to General Twaddle:^o

"Upon the departure of the 95th Infantry Division from the XX Corps I desire to commend you and your command for the outstanding manner in which you and they have accomplished all your assigned missions. The capture and development of your bridgehead over the Moselle River, the vital part that you and your Division played in the capture of the heretofore impregnable city of Metz and the crossing of the Saar River into the Siegfried Line where a bridgehead was established and held under the most difficult conditions, are but a few of the many operations which your command had undertaken and completed in a superior manner.

"The aggressive and efficient manner in which you carried out your appointed tasks reflects great credit upon your Division and upon you as its commanding general. Your sound judgment, keen foresight and the highly effective manner in which you employed your command contributed materially to the operational success of the XX Corps.

"Please convey to the officers, warrant officers and enlisted men of the 95th Infantry Division my personal thanks and those of the XX Corps for their fine fighting spirit, their untiring efforts, their skillful performance of duty and their effective teamwork which contributed so greatly toward the accomplishment of all their vital missions."

Every effort had been made to keep the Germans ignorant of the Division's move north. A deception unit from Twelfth Army Group took over the operation of 95th Division radio nets two days before the relief, in order to conceal the departure from the Saar. To prevent identification in the new area, all Division insignia were removed and all unit designations were removed from vehicles. In the course of the move, the Division columns were three times attacked by the Luftwaffe. The convoy of the 795th Ordnance Company was strafed on January 29 near Thionville^o by three Messerschmitt 109's, and three casualties were suffered. The same day, a second group of planes strafed roads and vehicles near Bouzonville,^o and a third group attacked vehicles near Dalstein.^o Otherwise, the move was made without incident, although it remains memorable for the bitter cold. The area which had been assigned the Division for billeting was one which had been hard hit during the recent "Battle of the Bulge," and it was initially necessary to bivouac some troops in the open because of the shortage of undestroyed houses. However, after a few days, all the Division was indoors, even though the crowding was reminiscent of "40 and 8" days. Reminders of the great struggle of the

Ardennes were everywhere in evidence. There were large numbers of tanks, both German and American, many of the former not knocked out but abandoned for lack of gas, and, as the snows began to melt, mines and the dead were revealed. Immediately to the rear of the 95th area, VIII Corps headquarters was located at Bastogne^o and in the 95th area elements of the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion were billeted in Houffalize.^o

The 95th Division was placed in VIII Corps reserve on its arrival in Belgium. On January 29, the VIII Corps had attacked to the northeast in an attempt to penetrate the Siegfried Line and to continue the attack in the same direction. Three infantry divisions, the 4th, the 87th and the 90th, were engaged in the attack, and the 95th Division, together with the 11th Armored Division, was to be ready to exploit any breakthrough achieved by one of the attacking divisions. But plans were soon changed, and the 95th Division found itself not only out of the VIII Corps but out of the Third U. S. Army.

February 2, the Division was directed to send an advance party to the vicinity of Maastricht,^o Holland, where it would report to the G-3 of the Ninth U. S. Army. February 3, the Division was informed that it was transferred from Third Army to Ninth Army and that it was to assemble in the vicinity of Maastricht,^o Holland, and of Tongres^o and Oupeye,^o Belgium.¹ The move was begun February 5, and by February 7 the Division had closed into the new area. To the regret of the entire Division, the proud connection with the Third U. S. Army and with General Patton^o was at an end.

¹At the same time, the 735th Tank Battalion and the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion were relieved from attachment to the Division; the latter had fought with the 95th since the beginning of the Metz campaign. In their place, Third Army attached the 761st Tank Battalion, a depleted Negro unit then in the line with the 87th Division, and the 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

THE MAAS,^o THE ROER^o AND THE RHINE

February 7-March 31

When the 95th Division became a part of the Ninth Army, the Army battle positions extended generally north-south along the Roer^o River. A large-scale attack, Operation Grenade, was scheduled for the near future; crossings of the Roer^o were to be forced and the Ninth Army was to drive to the Rhine. However, flood conditions delayed the attack several weeks, and Operation Grenade did not begin until February 23. Once begun, the attack advanced rapidly as the Germans fell back to the Rhine, and it was only in the last stages of the drive after March 1 that the 95th Division was committed. Two preliminary operations must be mentioned before the account of the Rhine drive; first, the temporary attachment of the Division (minus Division Artillery) to the British Second Army from February 16 to 22, and, second, the attachment of Division Artillery to the XIII Corps of the Ninth Army from February 7 until March 1 for the support of the crossing of the Roer^o and the drive to the Rhine.

For the first days after its arrival in the assembly area near Maastricht, the Division, which had been placed in Army reserve, conducted rehabilitation and training, although the latter was severely restricted by security regulations which made it impossible to exercise more than one platoon in any area at one time. On February 13, the Division (less Division Artillery and certain attached units) was directed to prepare for movement to the Second British Army sector. Later the same day, the Division was relieved of attachment to the Ninth U. S. Army and attached for operations only to the British VIII Corps of the Second British Army. At this time, the Second Army was occupying defensive positions along the line generally of the Maas (Meuse)^o and Roer^o rivers from Boxmeer,^o Holland, in the north to Heinsberg,^o Germany, in the south, where it made contact with the Ninth U. S. Army. On the left of the Second Army, the First Canadian Army was attacking, and the purpose of

the 95th Division attachment was to free a British division (the 52nd Light Mountain Infantry Division) for commitment on the right of the Canadians. The Division sector was on the left both of the VIII Corps and of the Second Army, and it extended along the Maas^o from Boxmeer^o in the north to Gelder^o in the south.¹

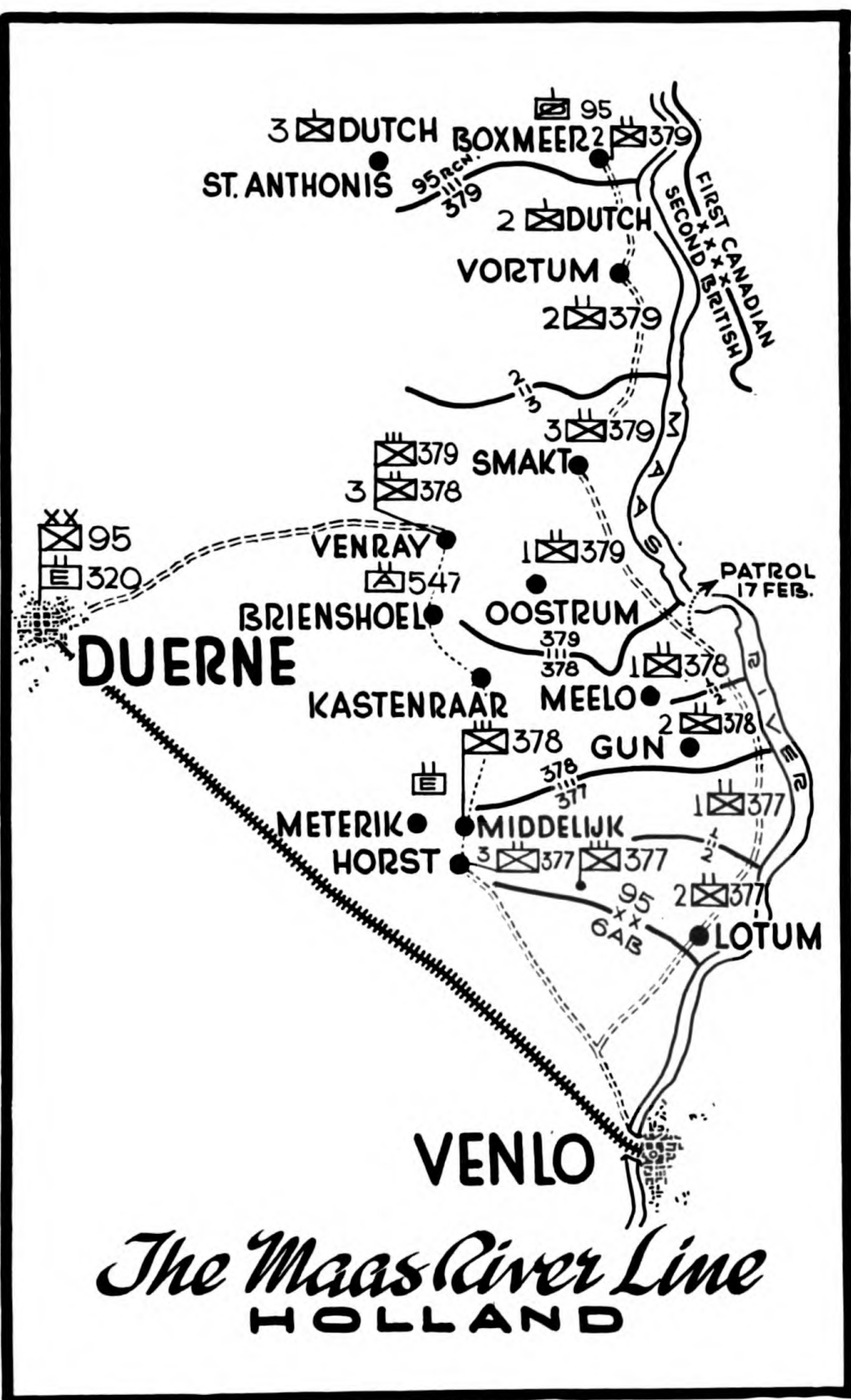
Advance elements of the Division moved north February 13, the main body moved on February 14 and command of the Maas^o sector passed to General Twaddle^o on February 15. As in the case of the previous moves north from the Saar, every effort was made to conceal the location of the Division, and the "Top Secret" movement order directed that no mention be made in correspondence either of the change in armies or locations. The success of the many counter-intelligence measures enforced by the Division was revealed on February 27 when higher headquarters captured an intelligence map of the German Army Group B. The 95th Division was carried as unlocated for at least two weeks and placed tentatively in the First U. S. Army south of Dueren.^o

The Division mission along the Maas was to hold a defensive line some 15 miles in length on the west side of the river. At the extreme left of the sector, the 95th Reconnaissance Troop was given its usual flank mission. To its south, the 379th Infantry, which was responsible for almost half of the Division front, had all three battalions on the line, and the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry was attached to the 379th Infantry as regimental reserve. Further south, the 378th Infantry had its 1st and 2nd battalions on the line. Finally, the 377th Infantry, on the Division right, had the 1st and 2nd battalions on line and the 3rd Battalion in regimental reserve.

The Germans remained completely unaggressive throughout the brief Division stay on the Maas,^o and the usual summary of enemy operations in the daily G-2 report read: "Enemy action negligible during period." When the 95th Division took over the sector, it was believed that the German 180th Infantry Division was opposite it, but it was also thought probable that the enemy would move this division north to meet the Canadian attack. In the absence of direct contact, it was impossible to determine whether or not this move had been made, and the British VIII Corps accordingly directed that a patrol be sent across the Maas^o in order to capture prisoners and secure certain identification of the German unit facing the Division.

This patrol was the one incident of note which occurred while the

¹Attached units were to include the British 25th Field Artillery Regiment, the Canadian 8th Reconnaissance Regiment (minus one squadron), the Dutch 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Companies, Troop B of the British 474th Searchlight Battery, Flight B of the British 659th Air Observation Squadron and two detachments of Troop C of the British 100th Radar Battery.



95th Division was holding the line of the Maas.^o The mission was assigned to the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry, and the date was set for the night of February 17-18. The patrol was led by Lt. Bernard A. Cyrier^o of Company A and consisted of 17 men from the same company, two Dutch to act as interpreters and guides and 12 men of Company B 320th Engineer Battalion to assist in the crossing. For the first time in Division patrol experience, "artificial moonlight" was furnished by attached British searchlight units.

The operation was begun at 1930 the evening of February 17, and the crossing was made at a point where the Maas^o turns sharply from north to west. Here the river, in the flooded condition which by now was accepted as normal for any 95th Division operation, was approximately 300 yards wide, and the current was such as to make control of the assault boats difficult. The engineers were at first forced downstream by the current, but they maneuvered the boats successfully and landed the patrol at the prearranged spot. Here the patrol split. The engineers and a security group remained by the river, and a 10-man assault group worked its way cautiously toward the village of Wellerlooie.^o Some 500 yards from the landing point, German soldiers were heard moving about in a house previously suspected of being an enemy outpost. The assault group waited for the changing of the guard, and four of them followed the sentry as he went in for his relief. Brief hand-to-hand fighting followed. One German was knifed to death, one killed by a pistol shot and the four remaining fled the house, only to be captured by the waiting members of the patrol. Lt. Cyrier^o ordered a quick return to the boats, for the operation had not yet alerted the enemy. However, shortly before reaching the boats, three anti-personnel mines were set off by members of the patrol. The explosions disclosed the location of the patrol to the Germans, and they opened fire with small arms, machine guns and mortars. Eleven casualties were suffered, including Lt. Cyrier,^o but the entire group reached the west bank of the Maas with the exception of the two Dutch guides and one of the captured Germans.

The results of the patrol were eminently satisfactory. The prisoners revealed that the 180th German Infantry Division had been moved north to take part in the defense against the Canadian attack and that the 190th German Infantry Division was now defending the east bank of the Maas in the Division sector. The 190th Infantry Division had originally been further south, but both it and the 8th Paratroop Division had extended their lines so as to cover the former 180th Division sector. The information was of importance to the British VIII Corps, and its commander, Lt. Gen. E. H. Barker,^o in a letter

to General Twaddle,^o extended his congratulations to the patrol members.

It had been understood that the Division would remain attached to the British Second Army only until British units should be available to relieve it, and at the time the Division took over the Maas^o line plans were already being made for its relief. On February 19, the first relieving troops arrived, on February 21 the relief had been completed and on February 22 the Division (minus Division Artillery) had closed into its former assembly area near Maastricht^o and was again in Ninth U. S. Army reserve. Training was resumed, and particular attention was given to problems and demonstrations in river crossing techniques.

The Ninth U. S. Army attack across the Roer^o (Operation Grenade) jumped off on February 23, but only the 95th Division Artillery took part in the initial stages of the attack. On February 7 the Division Artillery had been attached to the XIII Corps, the central corps on the Ninth Army front, and on February 8 it had moved to the vicinity of Lindern,^o Germany, about 15 miles northeast of Aachen.^o By the 13th Corp Division Artillery was allotted to the 84th Division. Its mission was to be in support of the Roer^o River crossing; registration was completed immediately, and fire plans were issued by the 84th Division Artillery. The original date for Operation Grenade was February 10, but, as had been mentioned, the flooded condition of the Roer^o River forced a postponement. The Division Artillery was informed of the postponement and was directed to be prepared to resume the operation on order.

During the next days, the 95th Division Artillery was allocated limited amounts of ammunition with which to fire on observed targets during the day and for harassing fires at night. Late the evening of February 13, the first V-1 casualties of the Division were suffered when a V-1 robot bomb landed between two guns of Battery B 359th Field Artillery Battalion. Three men were killed, 13 were injured and damage was inflicted both on vehicles and guns. On February 21 and again on February 22, all battalions fired for four minutes as a feint to draw enemy fire and to force the Germans to disclose their positions.

Finally, on February 22 orders were received designating 0330 February 23 as H-Hour for Operation Grenade. The fire plan called for a 45-minute preparation before H-Hour; then for 28 minutes fire was to be continued on areas further to the rear. Finally, interdiction firing was to be continued until ordered stopped. These missions were accomplished as planned. At daybreak a liaison plane from the 95th Division Artillery began a patrol of the front and adjusted



The commander of the Second British Army, General Miles C. Dempsey, and General Twaddle
at the Division Command Post, Duerne, Holland.



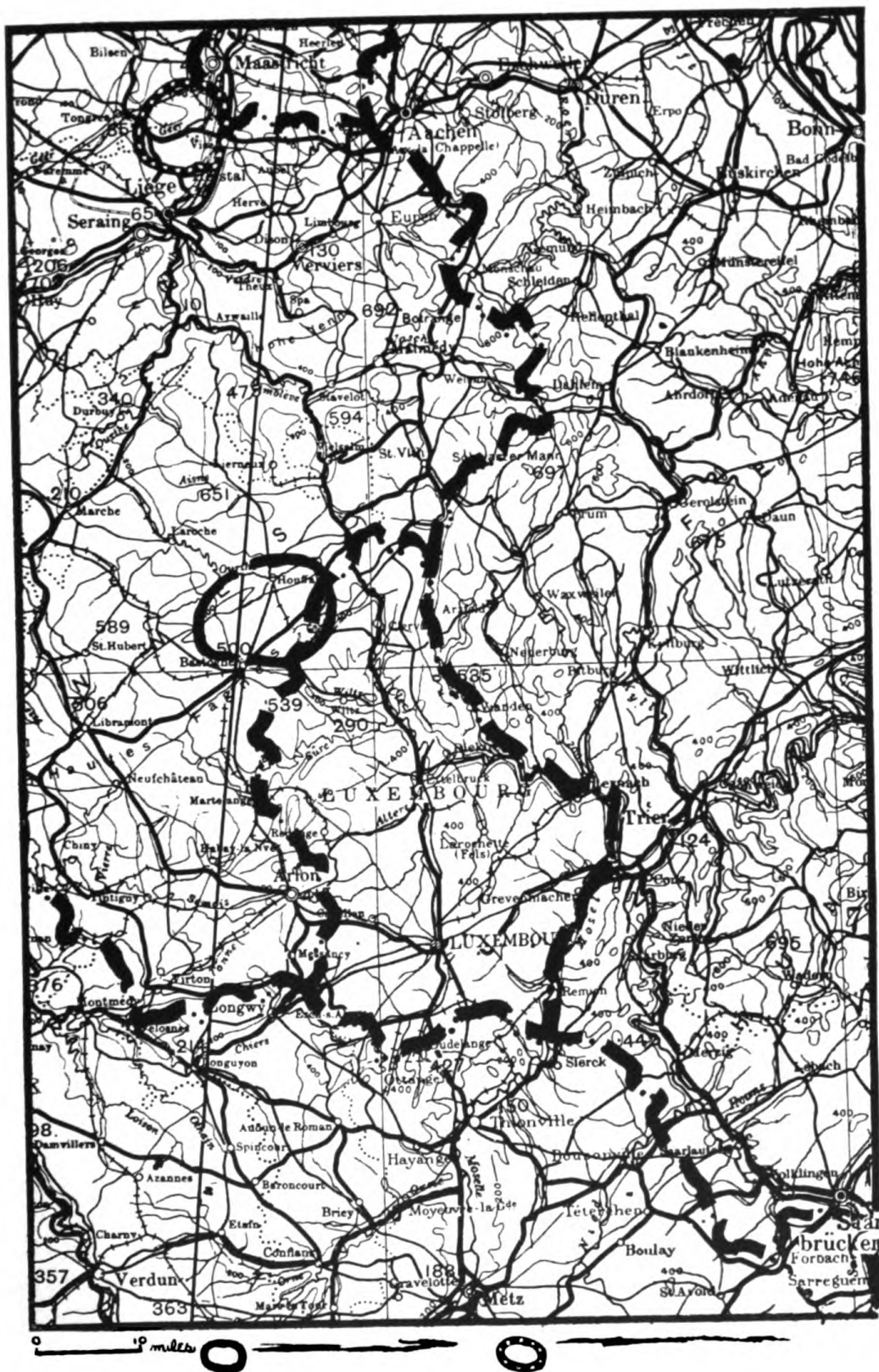
Anglo-95th Division cooperation in Holland: Military policemen of the Second British Army and the 95th Division confer at a busy intersection in Duerne, Holland.

fire on targets of opportunity. Enemy batteries, concentrations of vehicles and personnel, and tanks were among the targets observed, and at the end of the first day's operations 4,950 rounds of 105-millimeter and 1,498 rounds of 155-millimeter ammunition had been expended.

On February 24 at 0900, a preparation was fired for the continuation of the attack in accord with 84th Division Artillery fire plans. Later in the day, reconnaissance parties from the various battalions crossed the Roer to reconnoiter for new position areas. During the next two days, single pieces were taken over the Roer^o and registered in the new battalion areas; the 358th Field Artillery Battalion crossed the Roer February 25 and the remainder of the 95th Division Artillery moved to new positions in the vicinity of Baal^o on February 26. At 0635 February 27, an hour-long preparation was fired for a new attack by one of the 84th Division's regimental combat teams; the attack progressed rapidly and Division Artillery was soon left out of range. Reconnaissance was begun for displacement to forward positions, but the 84th Division directed Division Artillery to remain in position. During the night of February 27-28, all battalions shifted the direction of their fire to the northwest prepared to fire in the zone of the XVI Corps on the left against a possible German counterattack. The counterattack did not develop, and 95th Division Artillery remained in position until March 1 when it reverted to Division control.

Meanwhile, the Division, with the exception of Division Artillery, remained in the vicinity of Maastricht^o in Army reserve. On February 28 it began to move to a XIX Corps assembly area, and on March 1 it was assigned to the XIX Corps. At the same time, the XIX Corps attached the 379th Infantry regimental combat team to the 2nd Armored Division, and it was committed the following day. The remainder of the Division moved forward rapidly behind the attacking elements of XIX Corps, but it was not committed until March 4 and by March 5 the operation was complete. First, the XIX Corps plan will be outlined as background to the 95th Division participation in the drive; second, the attachment of the 379th Infantry Regiment to the 2nd Armored Division, March 1-4, will be described, and last an account will be given of the Division operation March 4-5.

The XIX Corps was on the extreme right of the Ninth Army, and its primary objective was the industrial area of Muenchen-Gladbach,^o 20 miles to the northeast. The Corps, in coordination with the Ninth U. S. Army plan, attacked at 0330 February 23 after a 45-minute artillery preparation. Two infantry divisions were employed in the first phase, the 29th Infantry Division on the left and the 30th Infantry Division on the right. Progress was rapid from the start. By



2400 February 23 the Roer^o had been crossed, advances of from 1,500 to 3,000 yards had been made east of the river and all of Juelich^o except the citadel had been taken. The advance continued during the next days, and by February 27, the XIX Corps had advanced five to 10 miles all along the front. As the drive continued, other divisions were committed, partly to maintain the impetus of the attack and partly to take care of an expansion of the Corps zone. Accordingly, the 2nd Armored Division was committed between the 29th and the 30th Divisions, and on February 28, although stiff initial resistance was met along a line from Rheydt^o (just south of Muenchen-Gladbach)^o southeast to Grevenbroich,^o the 2nd Armored Division advanced approximately 10 miles. On March 1 the 29th Infantry Division gained control of Muenchen-Gladbach,^o a leading industrial city with a population over 100,000 and the Corps' primary objective. To its right the 2nd Armored Division again drove forward approximately 10 miles. On the Corps right, the 30th Infantry Division was almost pinched out as it drove nearly to the boundary with the First Army. Between the 2nd Armored Division and the 30th Division, the 83rd Infantry Division was committed and advanced to the outskirts of Neuss^o and to within a few miles of the Rhine. On March 2 and 3, the 2nd Armored Division and the 83rd Infantry Division on the right would drive steadily forward in a generally north direction, and on March 4 and 5 the 95th Division would pass through the 2nd Armored Division to complete the clearing of the north portion of the assigned Corps zone.

On March 1, while the 95th Division was en route to an assembly area in the vicinity of Juelich,^o Combat Team Nine was attached to the 2nd Armored Division; the original destination was changed, and the regiment was directed to proceed to Kleinenbroich,^o about five miles east of Muenchen-Gladbach.¹⁰ By 0345 the entire regiment had closed into the Kleinenbroich^o area.

Early the morning of March 2, the 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry was attached to Combat Command B, 2nd Armored Division. At the same time, the 1st and 2nd Battalions were attached to Combat Command A, and a little later the entire combat team, with the exception of the 3rd Battalion, was attached to Combat Command A. The operations of the 3rd Battalion will be considered first.

At the time of its attachment, the 3rd Battalion was located in Bovert^o (a small town about half way between Uerdingen^o and

¹At the time of the attachment to the 2nd Armored Division the 359th Field Artillery Battalion, the artillery component of the 379th Infantry Regiment combat team, was still in the XIII Corps area. At 1235 it was directed to proceed directly to the new 379th Infantry location.



Juelich: Only an overnight stop as the Division moved forward in preparation for its part in the Rhine push.

Neuss^o). German troops in the woods east of Bovert^o had been harassing passing vehicles by small arms and Panzerfaust fire, and the 3rd Battalion was directed to clear the woods. Little resistance was met, a number of prisoners were captured and by dusk the area had been completely cleared. The 3rd Battalion then moved north to the near-by village of Strump;^o Company K was directed to occupy a group of houses on the northern edge of the town and to hold these positions for the night. At midnight, however, the Company K mission was changed, and the company was attached to the 3rd Battalion 67th Armored Regiment (one of the components of Combat Command B).

- At this time, the 2nd Armored Division, and in particular its Combat Command B, was making plans to seize the huge Adolf Hitler Bridge^o which crossed the Rhine at Uerdingen,^o a city about five miles north of Strump.^o The bridge was located at a point where the flat country was ideal for tank tactics, and if it could be captured XIX Corps would quickly funnel large amounts of men and armor across it for a secure bridgehead. The specific plan of the units with which Company K was operating called for the attack to move out from an area in the vicinity of Boesinghoven^o at 0100 March 3; the Autobahn leading east to the bridge was to be seized and tanks mounted by infantry would advance on it to the bridge, cross and secure the eastern end.

The attack was delayed until 0300 so that the tanks might be re-supplied with fuel and ammunition. At 0300 the advance was begun, and in the initial stages no resistance was met. Soon, however, 88's opened fire on the column and the two lead tanks were knocked out. The attack was temporarily halted, and Company K was directed to withdraw for the night to a small village to the rear. In the morning Companies I and L were ordered to resume the attack. They jumped off at dawn, knocked out the 88's which had broken up the American attack the night before, and at 0800 made contact with the enemy in a southern suburb of Uerdingen;^o 35 prisoners were taken in the vicinity of a railroad underpass about 500 yards from the Autobahn. At 0900 the commander of Combat Command B ordered Company K to mount the tanks again and to resume the attack of the preceding night.

At 1030 the tanks and infantry moved through the underpass and managed to advance about a block. At this point, increasing fire forced the tanks to halt, and a stubborn defense was opposed to the Company K advance. The fighting continued into the afternoon. At one point, a platoon of Company K reached the Autobahn, but the

highway was under heavy automatic weapons fire and it proved impossible to make use of it.

Accordingly, the original plan of Combat Command B was changed, and it was decided to approach the bridge directly from the south rather than by way of the Autobahn. Companies I and L were directed to clear the area a mile and a half south of the bridge, and Company K was ordered to disengage itself from the fighting in the vicinity of the railroad underpass and to move directly for the approaches to the bridge. Companies I and L accomplished their mission against light resistance, and at 1700 Company K had moved into position for the final assault on the bridge. The attack was begun with marching fire across 300 yards of open ground, and the advance was rapid. By 1730, Company K had taken its objective; 73 prisoners had been captured and it was estimated that 20 of the enemy had been killed.

The commander of Combat Command B was notified by radio that the approaches to the bridge had been secured. He ordered Company K to cross. Elements of the company advanced about 100 yards onto the bridge structure, to a point actually over the Rhine, but the roadway of the bridge had been demolished and was clearly impassible for tanks. On order, Company K withdrew and secured the area at the approach to the bridge, including two pillboxes and a factory south of the Autobahn and one pillbox north of it. In the evening, Company L was directed to launch an attack through Company K to the north. The attack began at 2300, and fierce fighting continued through most of the night. The Germans defending the area were paratroopers, excellent soldiers with high morale, and bitter house-to-house fighting took place. By early morning, only five buildings had been cleared at the high cost of 17 casualties. The 3rd Battalion was directed to remain in position until other units made contact with it from the west and north, and the battalion operation in connection with the bridge was at an end.

Meanwhile, the remainder of the 379th Infantry had been attached to Combat Command A. At 0530 March 2, the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry was directed to move to Schiefbahn,^o about three miles northeast of Muenchen-Gladbach,^o to relieve elements of the combat command located there and to finish clearing out the town. The 2nd Battalion entered Schiefbahn^o at 0715, quickly cleared sniper resistance and took 60 prisoners. At 0920, the 1st Battalion 379th was directed to move to Schiefbahn^o to relieve the 2nd Battalion; when relieved, the 2nd Battalion was to move north to Willich. The 2nd Battalion closed into Willich^o without opposition at 1500 and was directed to continue to Fischeln,^o two miles southeast of Krefeld^o and

five miles southeast of Uerdingen.^o The battalion attacked against Fischeln^o at 1630; some small arms fire was received but the bulk of the opposition came from artillery and antitank weapons. By 1830 the town had been cleared.

Meanwhile, plans had been made for a night attack to cut the east-west roads running between Uerdingen^o and Krefeld.^o The battalion attacked shortly after midnight with Company G on the left and Company F on the right. The enemy was taken by surprise; 20 prisoners were captured as well as a Mark V tank and an armored car. The battalion was reorganized after reaching its objective, and defensive positions were consolidated in the eastern outskirts of Krefeld.^o The 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry remained in these positions throughout the day of March 3.

While the 2nd Battalion had been advancing, the 1st Battalion had been kept to its immediate rear by a series of forward displacements. From Willich,^o it was ordered at 0600 March 3 to move Company B by motor, and the remainder of the battalion by foot to Fischeln. It was then ordered to attack to gain a position on the right of the 2nd Battalion. The 1st Battalion attacked at 1500 with Company A on the left, Company B in the center and Company C on the right; the residential district of Bockum,^o midway between Krefeld^o and Uerdingen,^o was the objective. Little resistance was met initially as the companies moved north and then east toward Bockum,^o but at 1600 heavy mortar and artillery fire was directed against the battalion. Nevertheless, the advance was continued, and by dark the town of Bockum^o was in American hands and outposts had been set up 500 yards from Uerdingen.^o

By the evening of March 3, the three infantry battalions of the 379th Infantry were located generally along an east-west line from Krefeld to the Adolf Hitler Bridge.^o On the left, the 2nd Battalion was on the outskirts of Krefeld;^o in the center, the 1st Battalion held the Bockum^o area; and on the right, the 3rd Battalion held the western approaches to the Adolf Hitler Bridge.^o

The Germans had not yet destroyed the bridge, and a patrol from the 2nd Armored Division had reported that the demolished roadway could be repaired by the use of treadways. Accordingly, it was decided to make one more attempt to seize the bridge intact, and at 1845 March 3 the mission was assigned to the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry. The reinforced¹ 2nd Battalion was to move to the 3rd Battalion positions at the western approaches to the bridge, where it would be joined by two companies of armored infantry. With these,

¹The 2nd Battalion was to have attached two platoons and the mine platoon of the regimental Antitank Company, a platoon of Company C 320th Engineer Battalion and the 379th Infantry regimental scouts.

it was to cross the bridge, secure the eastern end and establish a bridgehead. Once the bridgehead had been gained, it would be exploited by the remainder of the 379th Infantry and by the 2nd Armored Division.

At 0315, the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry reached the western approaches to the bridge, but the two companies of armored infantry were not yet there. At 0400, the commander of Combat Command B informed Lt. Colonel Richmond, commanding the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry, that the two companies were not available but that otherwise the operation would be carried out as planned. Since a heavy explosion had been heard at the eastern end of the bridge about midnight, permission was granted to send a patrol first to reconnoiter the crossing. At 0445, an officer and five men of Company F worked their way along the girders past the first break in the roadway and continued until they were over dry land at the eastern end of the bridge. Here, however, they found that German demolitions had rendered the bridge completely impassable, even for foot troops. Not only had an explosion destroyed the roadway, but it had set fire to the asphalt and a whole section of the bridge was in flames. The patrol returned and gave their information to Lt. Colonel Richmond,^o at 0530. He immediately informed Colonel Bacon,^o who canceled the bridgecrossing mission of the 2nd Battalion and ordered it back to Krefeld,^o into which it closed at 1000. Meanwhile, at 0700, the Germans had set off the main demolitions, and the bridge was a mass of wreckage.

The morning of March 4 the attachment of the 379th Infantry to the 2nd Armored Division was terminated, and the 95th Division was committed as a whole in the drive to the Rhine. To understand this development, it is necessary to place it against the general background of the XIX Corps operation. By the evening of March 3, the XIX Corps had practically completed the clearing of its zone to the Rhine. On March 1, the 29th Infantry Division had cleared Muenchen-Gladbach,^o the Corps' primary objective, and by the evening of March 2 it was out of contact with the enemy. On March 2, the 83rd Infantry Division took Neuss^o and was encountering only light resistance in clearing out small groups of enemy from the pocket formed by the loop of the Rhine north of that city. At the same time, the 2nd Armored Division was quickly reducing the last elements of resistance in a pocket south of the Adolf Hitler Bridge^o and was preparing to move north from the Krefeld^o-Uerdingen^o line against the somewhat larger pocket, containing about 25 square miles, which formed the northernmost portion of the XIX Corps zone.

The problem of the commitment of the 95th Division could not be settled by Corps until the status of the Uerdingen^o bridge was known,



Above: The Adolph Hitler autobahn bridge at Uerdingen.
Below: Division troops move into Uerdingen. The Adolph Hitler autobahn bridge is in the background.

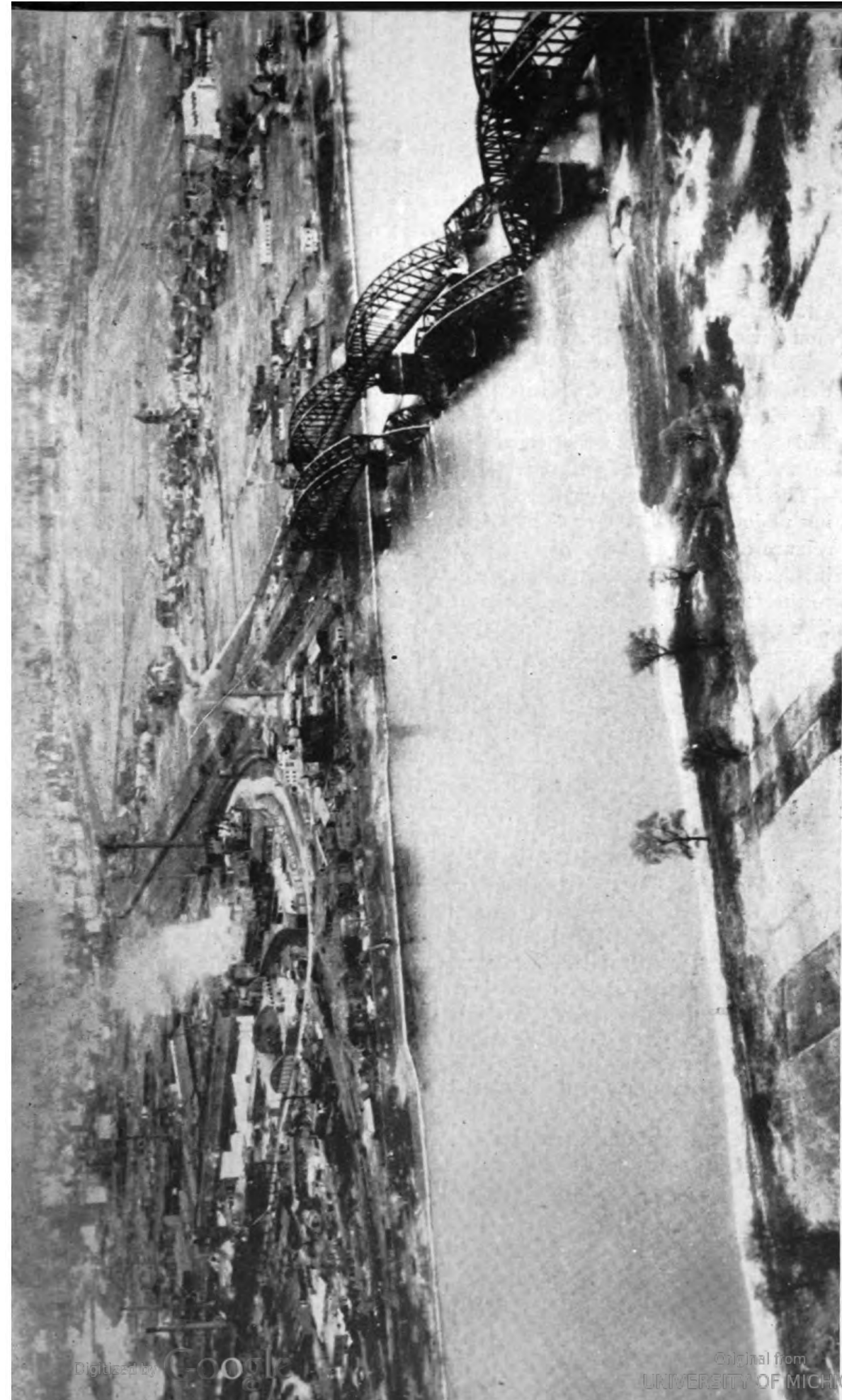
since if this could be seized and made the basis of a Rhine bridgehead, the immediate exploitation of the bridgehead was far more important than the final clearing out of the Corps zone in the north. Accordingly, the XIX Corps letter of instructions issued during the night of March 3-4 set forth two alternative plans depending on whether or not the bridge could be captured intact. If the bridge were seized, the 379th Infantry would remain attached to the 2nd Armored Division and the entire regiment would cross the bridge as soon as elements of the 95th Division could relieve it along the Krefeld^o-Uerdingen^o line. Combat Command A of the 2nd Armored Division would abandon the attack to the north, leaving only roadblocks in its zone, and would also cross the bridge to join Combat Command B east of the Rhine. If, however, the bridge were destroyed by the Germans, the 379th Infantry would immediately revert to 95th Division control and Combat Command A would continue its attack north as far as the Rubrocks Canal. In either case, the 95th Division was to become operational at 0830 March 4 and was to attack to the northeast from a boundary agreed upon with the commanding general of the 2nd Armored Division; its mission was to clear the enemy from the Corps zone to the Corps boundary on the left and to the Rhine on the right.

Accordingly, two plans were worked out by the Division in coordination with the 2nd Armored Division, one to be put into effect if the bridge were seized and the other if the bridge were destroyed. At 0850 March 4, it was determined that the bridge had been destroyed and, accordingly, the second plan was put into effect. The 379th Infantry was detached from the 2nd Armored Division and reverted to 95th Division control, and both divisions prepared to attack. By afternoon, the 2nd Armored Division had cleaned out the pocket south of Uerdingen^o and from Krefeld^o had advanced to the canal which was its north boundary; the 2nd Armored Division's part in the Rhine drive had been completed.

During the first days of March, the 95th Division had been engaged in a series of rapid displacements to enable it to remain close to the rapidly advancing XIX Corps front. On March 1, it was in process of movement to an assembly area near Juelich,^o and by evening the 377th Infantry had closed into Mersch. The 378th Infantry, however, had not yet closed into the Juelich^o assembly area when it was directed to continue toward the vicinity of Muenchen-Gladbach.^o On March 3 the forward movement continued. The 378th Infantry moved first to Osterath,^o about five miles south of Uerdingen,^o where it closed in shortly before midnight; the regiment was then alerted to move to another area, near Krefeld,^o prepared to attack in the morning. The 377th Infantry displaced to Herzbroich,^o a few miles



Above: Drawing a bead on the enemy across the Rhine at Uerdingen.
 Below: This German train, captured in Uerdingen's railroad yard, was loaded with crash-landed American and British aircraft which the Nazis hoped to repair for use against the Allies.



A 95th Division Artillery shell is seen exploding east of the Rhine in the city of Duisberg.

east of Muenchen-Gladbach.^o Division Artillery (minus the 359th Field Artillery Battalion, attached to the 379th Infantry), which had not yet moved from the XIII Corps positions at Baal,^o displaced on March 3 to the vicinity of Osterath.^o

The Division was therefore in a position to attack the morning of March 4, and when at 0850 it was definitely determined that the Adolf Hitler Bridge^o had been blown, General Twaddle^o ordered the attack begun at 0915. The plan of the attack may be seen in Division Field Order No. 15.

The 95th Division¹ was to attack at 0915 to seize the west bank of the Rhine in zone. In addition, it was to seize the two bridges in the vicinity of Rheinhausen^o (about seven miles northeast of Krefeld),^o and, on Corps order, it was to attack and seize a bridgehead east of the Rhine at Duisburg.^o

The 379th Infantry remained in the area where it had been operating under the 2nd Armored Division, and when it had completed the seizure of the west bank of the Rhine in its zone it was to assemble in Uerdingen^o as Division reserve. It was to be prepared to cross to the east of the Rhine over a captured bridge and attack to the east. The pocket in the loop of the Rhine north of Uerdingen^o was to be cleared by the 378th Infantry on the right, making the main effort, and by the 377th Infantry on the left. The line of departure was generally to the northeast of Krefeld.^o

The 378th Infantry was to attack at 0915 March 4, secure the bank of the Rhine in its zone and to seize intact the bridges over the Rhine at Rheinhausen.^o On Division order, it would seize a bridgehead across the Rhine. The 377th Infantry would displace to a forward assembly area the night of March 4-5 and would attack at 0700 the next morning to clear its zone. The 95th Reconnaissance Troop was to work on the Division's left flank, maintaining contact with elements of the 2nd Armored Division until these were pinched out and then establishing contact with the XIII Corps. The field order concluded with the statement that the attack was to be pressed with the utmost vigor to keep the Germans in their present disorganized condition until they were destroyed. To implement this aim, each infantry regiment was ordered to maintain a minimum of one infantry battalion in reserve to relieve or pass through tiring troops and thereby maintain the impetus of the attack.

The Division's mission was quickly accomplished against generally light resistance, although stubborn opposition was encountered by the 379th Infantry in the vicinity of the bridge. Nevertheless, the afternoon of March 5 the last German resistance in the Division zone had ceased.

¹Attached were the 547th A.A.A. Battalion, the 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 709th Tank Battalion and the 70th Field Artillery Battalion. This last unit was attached effective 1200 March 4.

The 379th Infantry attacked at 0915 with the 1st Battalion, while the 2nd Battalion was moving back to its positions at Krefeld^o and the 3rd Battalion was effecting reorganization on the western approaches of the bridge. The 1st Battalion advanced from the Bockum^o area toward the southern section of Uerdingen^o with Company B on the right, Company A on the left and Company C in reserve. The German paratroopers defending Uerdingen^o held strongly entrenched positions along the railroad embankment which runs west of this portion of Uerdingen,^o and they offered stubborn and determined opposition to the 1st Battalion advance. Nevertheless, by 1300, the two attacking companies had reached a position just short of the railroad, and Company A with its supporting tanks had knocked out an assault gun, an '88' and a Mark V tank near the embankment. The fighting against the well-chosen positions on the railroad continued through the afternoon and the night, but by morning it was discovered that all the paratroopers had been killed or had withdrawn. Plans had been made to continue the attack March 5 by moving the 2nd Battalion around through the 378th Infantry zone and advancing south with the railroad embankment as its right boundary.

The 378th Infantry, on the left of the 379th Infantry, also attacked at 0915 March 4. The 1st Battalion led the advance, the 3rd Battalion followed prepared for commitment on the right if necessary and the 2nd Battalion was in reserve. The 1st Battalion moved forward with Company C on the left and Company B on the right; by 1000, against negligible resistance, it had reached the eastern edge of the large park west of Uerdingen.^o Company C continued the advance into Uerdingen^o and met only light small arms resistance. Company B, on the right, became engaged with the paratroopers on its right flank, and Company A, previously in reserve, was committed against this threat. Company B continued and ran up against a strongly held line along the railroad, but the Germans were forced to withdraw from it by small arms and mortar fire combined with bazooka fire directed against the emplacements from near-by buildings. Once the Germans' line of defense along the railroad had been broken the advance was rapid, and by 1500 the 1st Battalion 378th Infantry had cleared its zone to the Rhine.

During the night of March 4-5, the 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry, in position at the bridge, reported that the Germans still remaining in the Uerdingen^o pocket were attempting to escape across the Rhine by ferry. It was requested that a searchlight be placed on the river to frustrate this plan, and by 2245 a searchlight had been obtained from the 547th A.A.A. Battalion and had accomplished its purpose. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry left its positions in Kre-

feld at 1830 March 4 and moved forward in preparation for the attack the next morning.

On March 5, the 95th Division employed all three regiments in the attack, the 377th Infantry on the left, the 378th Infantry in the center and the 379th Infantry on the right. On the right, the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry passed through the 378th Infantry zone and attacked south at 0630. Resistance was light and by 0900 the battalion had driven south to make contact with the 3rd Battalion 379th Infantry at the bridge. The Germans in the south of Uerdingen^o were now completely cut off, and the 2nd and 3rd battalions continued the attack to reduce the small pocket of resistance remaining. The German will to resist of the past days had by now been broken. By 1100, the enemy-held zone had been reduced to three blocks, and by noon the 379th Infantry zone had been completely cleared.

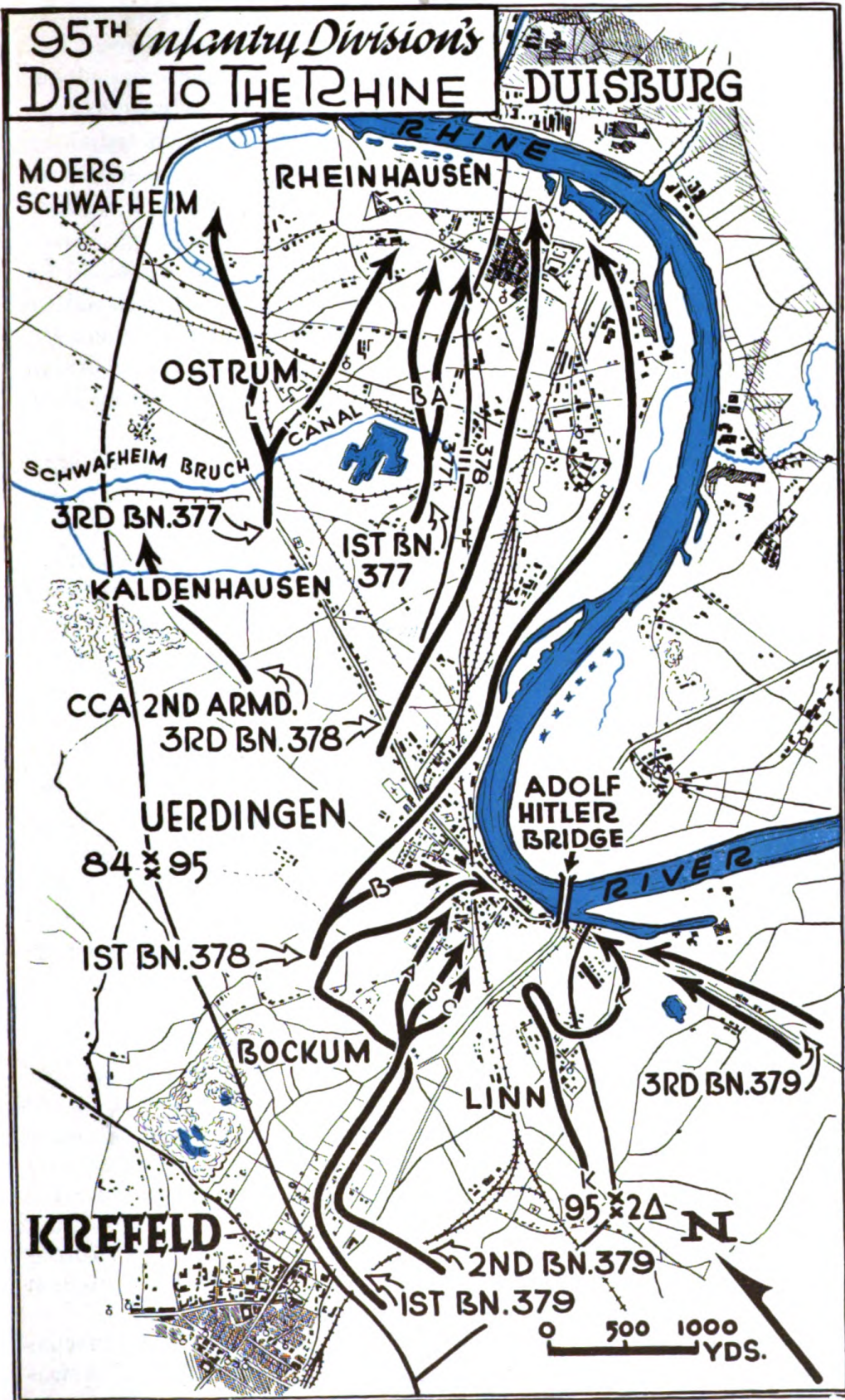
Meanwhile, at 0700, the 378th Infantry had attacked with the 1st Battalion on the right and the 3rd Battalion on the left. The main objectives were the Rheinhausen^o bridges, but at 0800 a Division Artillery liaison plane reported that both the road bridge and the railroad bridge had been destroyed. The two battalions continued their advance and met no ground resistance, although, at 1000, 10 Messerschmitt 109's strafed the 3rd Battalion column. By 1130, both battalions had proceeded to the center of Rheinhausen^o and by 1300 the regimental zone had been cleared of the enemy.

The 377th Infantry, on the left of the Division zone, met no more opposition than did the 378th Infantry. On the regiment's right, the 1st Battalion left its assembly area on the eastern outskirts of Krefeld^o (Kuhleshuetten)^o at 0700 and crossed the line of departure at 0815. The 3rd Battalion, on the regiment's left, moved out from its Krefeld^o assembly area at 0900 and moved forward to attack through the zone of the 2nd Armored Division. No resistance was met anywhere, and the 1st Battalion reached the Rhine at 1400 and the 3rd Battalion at 1530.

The 95th Reconnaissance Troop had moved out at 0630 to initiate a reconnaissance of the Division's left flank. By 0745 it had reached Kaldenhausen^o without resistance, and by noon the troop had made contact with the right elements of the XIII Corps. Finally, by 1000 the reconnaissance troop reached the Rhine, still without encountering any enemy.

In the course of the attack March 5, the Division Artillery air section suffered its first losses as a direct result of enemy action. Several attacks were made by the Luftwaffe on artillery observation planes operating within the Division sector. At 1300 a plane of the 358th Field Artillery Battalion was attacked and shot down in flames with

95TH Infantry Division's Drive To The Rhine



the loss of both pilot and observer.' Later in the afternoon, a plane of the 360th Field Artillery Battalion was shot down and wrecked in a crash landing, but both the pilot and the observer escaped uninjured. To prevent the recurrence of such losses, a new system was worked out for situations similar to that which had existed along the Rhine. Two planes were to be used together for observation, with the higher plane concentrating on the watch for enemy aircraft and the lower plane continuing its usual mission of observation of fire.

During the afternoon of March 5, the 95th Division organized its line on the west bank of the Rhine and harassing fire was placed on enemy positions across the river. Plans were tentatively made for a forced crossing to take advantage of the apparent lack of German defenses east of the Rhine, but higher headquarters disapproved the plans and they were dropped.

The drive to the Rhine involved more serious problems of military government than had been previously encountered. In the Metz and Saar campaigns, most of the fighting had been on French soil, and in that part of Germany overrun by the Division the German government had already evacuated a large percentage of the civilians and those who remained could be collected and controlled in relatively small groups. On the Rhine, however, the civilians were far too numerous to make segregation practicable, and a great strain was placed on the Division's military government facilities. The regiments were forced to take the first steps toward control as soon as the fighting was over, and the evening of March 5 General Twaddle^o held a conference during which he indicated the districts assigned the various units for military government and outlined the policies which were to be enforced. All weapons were to be collected and turned over to the Division ordnance officer, and signal equipment was to be given to the Division signal officer. All males between 15 and 45 were to be screened by the Division counter-intelligence detachment, supplemented by additional German-speaking personnel from the Division, and those who had been in the German army within the last six months were to be sent to the prisoner-of-war enclosure. The displaced persons (DP's), the foreign laborers forced to work in Germany, were to be told to stand fast until other arrangements could be made. In the cities, local mayors or Buergermeisters were to be appointed, and every effort was to be made to restore the most essential public services. These policies were carried out during the few days the Division remained in position on the Rhine, and progress was being made toward a settlement of the civilian problem when the Division was relieved.

During the period from March 6 to March 10, the Division continued to outpost the west bank of the Rhine. Enemy action was

for the most part limited to extremely light artillery fire, although on March 9 six German planes strafed the Division area with little effect. On March 10, the relief of the Division by elements of the 84th and 102nd Infantry Divisions was begun, and on March 11, command of the sector passed to the commanding generals of these two divisions. The 95th Division moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Ameln.^o

Here the Division was out of contact with the enemy and conducted rehabilitation and training with the emphasis placed on river-crossing problems. The Erft Canal^o was used for practical experience, since the near-by Roer was still too flooded. Other training included the development of a fast-moving task force to engage in pursuit of a disorganized enemy.

On March 17, the Division was informed by XIX Corps that by March 21 it was to complete the relief of elements of the 83rd Infantry Division in the Neuss^o area. Neuss,^o a city with a pre-war population of 60,000, was located on the Rhine about 10 miles east of Muenchen-Gladbach^o and had been captured by the 83rd Division March 2. General Twaddle^o directed the 379th Infantry to effect the relief, together with the 95th Division Artillery, while the rest of the Division continued to conduct training and rehabilitation in the Ameln^o area. The Neuss^o mission was purely defensive and particular attention was to be given to security and to counter-reconnaissance to capture or destroy all enemy crossing the Rhine in either direction. Smoke missions were to be maintained, not only in the 379th Infantry sector, but also in that of the 113th Cavalry Group on the right, and these operations were to be under the control of the Division chemical officer. The Division Artillery was to support the 379th defense and was also to maintain a program of destructive, interdiction and harassing fire on enemy installations east of the Rhine, while the Division Artillery was in position in the vicinity of Neuss^o the 200,000th round expended in combat by its organic battalions was fired by the 360th Field Artillery Battalion. The normal supporting elements of the 547th A.A.A. Battalion would maintain the usual anti-aircraft defense. Finally, the 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion would continue the work begun by the relieved unit (the 643rd Tank Destroyer Battalion) in building camouflaged tank destroyer positions with fire capability of preventing enemy traffic on the Rhine.

Enemy action was negligible while the Division was in this area. There was some harassing artillery fire with rare concentrations and almost no small arms fire. During the night, the enemy made some improvements in his defenses east of the Rhine. On March 21, the commanding general of the XIX Corps directed that the Division send four (this was later changed to two) patrols across the Rhine

the night of March 22-23, and two further patrols the night of March 23-24. The patrols which attempted to cross the first night found the current too strong, and were unable to reach the opposite shore. However, despite the fact that considerable noise was made, no fire was received.

The next night, two patrols successfully made the crossing. The first, consisting of one officer and 32 enlisted men, left the west bank at 0400 and worked its way across against the stiff current. The patrol made an extensive reconnaissance, but although some enemy positions were located, no contact was made, and the patrol returned without incident. The second patrol, made up of part of the regimental scouts, consisted of two officers and 38 enlisted men. Three assault boats were used and the move across the Rhine was begun at 0400. One of the boats was forced back by the current, but the other two reached the river wall and landed, receiving a small amount of small arms fire at this time. Once ashore, the men made contact with the enemy, who directed grenades against them from the second and higher river wall. However, the group which landed at this point was able to work its way to the right and made contact with the second group. The latter had already advanced into the park and had captured a prisoner, a German guard who had jumped into a foxhole when the Americans approached but who had been flushed out with grenades. As they returned, a number of Germans were seen milling around a machine gun position; the group was broken up with several rounds from a bazooka. The two boats then pushed off and began to return. At this time, considerable enemy fire was received. Prepared artillery concentrations were called for, and the groups succeeded in making their return without casualty. The prisoner was a member of the Duesseldorf^o Volkssturm, whose ages varied from 48 to 68. They were armed with Dutch Army rifles, .25-caliber, and with 50 rounds of ammunition per man. Positions were manned at intervals of 100 to 150 yards, and at each position 2 to 6 grenades were available.

Meanwhile, events elsewhere were having their effects on the position of the 95th Division. On March 24, the Twenty-First Army Group crossed the Rhine at four points, and the XIX Corps prepared to use the 2nd Armored Division as the northern arm of a brilliant pincer movement to envelop the Ruhr. On March 26, Combat Team Seven of the Division was attached to the 2nd Armored Division and on March 27 initiated movement to the assembly area of the 2nd Armored. Also, on March 26 the remainder of the Division was relieved from the XIX Corps, now entirely engaged in operations east of the Rhine, and placed under operational control of the XIII

Corps. On March 28 it became necessary for the XIX Corps to make use of the 113rd Cavalry Group, then holding a sector to the right of the Division. Its mission was taken over by the 379th Infantry and relief was completed by the morning of March 30. The new assignment had the effect of more than doubling the length of the 379th front, but the mission remained defensive, the enemy was extremely occupied elsewhere and there was little new to report as a result of the change.

Finally, at 1200 March 30 the 95th Division was relieved from the XIII Corps and was assigned to the operational control of the XXII Corps of the Fifteenth U. S. Army. The Fifteenth Army, initially responsible for the defense of the Rhine from Bonn^o (exclusive) to Neuss^o (inclusive), was preparing to occupy, organize and govern the Rhineland province behind the advancing armies, and the XXII Corps had taken over this mission. The 95th Infantry Division would continue its defense of the assigned sector until it was relieved by the 97th Infantry Division, the relief to be begun not later than the night of March 31-April 1. When the relief had been completed, the 95th Division would revert to the XIX Corps. On March 31, the Division was directed to move to an assembly area in the vicinity of Duellen,^o and by April 2 the whole Division was east of the Rhine and beginning a new phase of its combat history.



German children, as well as adult Germans, were put to work tilling the soil to grow their own produce by Division military government officials while the Division "rested" in the Ameln vicinity.

THE RUHR POCKET

Introduction

"Germany, having waged total war, now faces total defeat." This statement, from a Twelfth Army Group weekly intelligence summary for the period ending April 3, the day of the 95th Division's Ruhr Pocket commitment, was an accurate appraisal. German forces in the west were showing signs of demoralization, German army groups were split, German armies were broken up and many divisions had been annihilated. Replacement and training battalions that were poured into the battle wholesale by the die-hard enemy high command were swelling Allied prisoner of war camps without effecting the course of battle or appreciably stiffening enemy resistance except in certain isolated areas. The state of German forces in the west was desperate, due not only to the Allied offensives but to the combination of four conditions, any one of which would represent a vital weakness over a period of time: The enemy's inability to replace losses during the winter campaigns in the east and west of an estimated 1,500,000 troops of suitable physique and training, the shortage of ammunition, the reduction of gasoline production to an estimated twelve per cent of normal and the crippling of the German rail transport system through the cumulative effect of air attack and the loss of the vast Ruhr coal supply.

Allied armor continued to roam almost at will throughout the Reich. General of the Army Eisenhower called upon all members of the German army who had lost contact with their high command to cease hostilities. More than 3,000 Allied tanks were officially reported to be east of the Rhine, but the specific whereabouts of these armored spearheads was shrouded in a security silence. Stiffest resistance was being met by the American Seventh Army which, on this date, had almost reached Wurzburg and was within 130 miles of Munich. Farther north, Third Army tank columns had reached the outskirts of Kassel, 165 miles southwest of Berlin, and were within a hundred miles of the Czech border. Germany was being sawed in half.

As the second quarter of 1945 opened, Russia, having secured her flanks with the capture of Danzig and Pomerania in the north and with a drive across the Austrian border in the south, was coiling for the decisive strike on the Berlin front. On the "forgotten front" in Italy, Gen. Mark Clark told his Fifth and Eighth Armies that all was in readiness for a breakout into the Po Valley. In the Pacific, there was no Allied confirmation of American landings in the Ryukyus—Okinawa. Such was the "big picture" as the new month opened on Easter Sunday and the 95th Division was readying for movement east of the Rhine and its subsequent reduction of a major part of the Ruhr Pocket.

The envelopment and ultimate reduction of the Ruhr Pocket had its beginning on March 7, 1945, when elements of the 9th Armored Division seized intact the Ludendorf railroad bridge spanning the Rhine at Remagen. From this narrow bridgehead sprang the First U. S. Army's looping drive to the north and east, spearheaded by the 3rd Armored Division, which closed up two sides of the vast and industrially significant Ruhr basin.

The northern pincer of what eventually became known as one of the greatest double-envelopments in history was not sprung until seventeen days after the Remagen bridge was seized when the Twenty-First Army Group leaped the Rhine at four points between Rees and Duisberg March 24, employing both airborne and waterborne troops. Within twenty-four hours, the bridgehead was consolidated and expanded to a width of thirty miles and a depth of eight. Already plans were being made to commit a battering-ram armored-infantry combination which would drive through the bridgehead forces to a junction of the northward racing columns of the First Army. The Ninth U. S. Army's XIX Corps drew the assignment, and more specifically the 2nd Armored Division, with Combat Team Seven of the 95th Infantry Division attached. In addition, the 83rd Infantry Division, reinforced, was to move in two motorized columns behind the 2nd Armored Division to clean up bypassed enemy positions.

By March 29, when all elements of the 2nd Armored Division had assembled east of the Rhine and were preparing for the jumpoff at dawn of the next day, the First Army's 3rd Armored Division was embarking on a fifty-five-mile thrust to within ten miles of Paderborn. And on March 30 this spearhead from the south was destined to enter Paderborn and start curling to the west in a move to meet the incipient 2nd Armored Division's drive from the Rhine. Thus was the stage set for a lightning sealing-off of the Ruhr region.

Two principal factors made envelopment of the Ruhr militarily

desirable. Of immediate interest was the fact that an estimated 100,000 troops thus would be sealed off, to be dealt with at will and at a minimum of expenditure in materiel and manpower. (As a matter of fact, when the pocket finally was liquidated nearly a month later, more than 325,000 prisoners had been captured.) That was the tactical consideration. More important, however, was the strategic potential of the campaign. In the Ruhr was the equivalent of Pittsburgh and Detroit, plus the coal fields of Pennsylvania and West Virginia and the rail transportation hub of Chicago. The Ruhr was one of the greatest iron and steel producing regions in the world. Seventy-eight per cent of Germany's 1941 coal yield came from the Ruhr and the region had produced much of Germany's armaments for many years. To isolate and render impotent this vast industrial potential could spell the early doom of the Nazi war machine. For already Germany's second-ranking industrial area, Silesia, was in Russian hands. Coal, steel, synthetic fuel, chemicals and heavy industry all were contained in the Ruhr. The Ruhr basin might well have been termed the fountainhead of German military might.

Prior to the 95th Division's Ruhr Pocket commitment, its Combat Team Seven was an element of the northern arm of the Ruhr envelopment as an attachment to the 2nd Armored Division.

THE ATTACHMENT OF COMBAT TEAM SEVEN TO THE 2nd ARMORED DIVISION

Regimental Combat Team Seven, commanded by Colonel Fred E. Gaillard, moved to join the 2nd Armored Division on less than twenty-four hours notice. The combat team was alerted in mid-afternoon March 26, established liaison with the 2nd Armored Division at 1800 and began movement to a new assembly area at Steinhäusen the following morning. Elements of the combat team included the 377th Infantry Regiment, the 920th Field Artillery Battalion, Company A 320th Medical Battalion, Company A 320th Engineer Battalion, Company A 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion and Battery C 547th A.A.A. Battalion. To completely motorize the combat team, two quartermaster truck companies and sixteen additional trucks from the 547th A.A.A. Battalion were attached.

During the morning of March 27, Colonel Gaillard and his unit commanders were briefed on the mission at the headquarters of the 2nd Armored Division's Combat Command A at Korschenbroich, two miles east of Muenchen-Gladbach. Briefly, the 2nd Armored Division and attachments were to assemble in the Krefeld vicinity, move north, cross to the east side of the Rhine and drive to the east into the heart of Germany, bypassing the Ruhr valley on the north.

The 2nd Armored Division's Field Order No. 4 filled in the details. Already east of the Rhine in the Wesel area were the 17th Airborne and the 30th Infantry Divisions, with orders to continue their attack to east. The 8th Armored Division was scheduled to pass through the 30th Division at daylight of March 28 and attack east. At the same time, the British 7th Armored Division was to break out in the direction of Reken-Coesfeld to the northeast. The order read, in part:

2nd Armored Division initiates crossing of the Rhine River over two bridges at 0100 March 28. Division passes through elements of the 30th Infantry Division, crossing Lippe River in the Hunxe-Dorsten area and passing through elements of the 17th Airborne Division to the north of the Lippe River.

Division exploits breakthrough accomplished and advances rapidly to the general area Duellen-Hamm, blocking communications and roads to the east of Hamm and prepared to continue advance on Berlin generally via the Autobahn.

Combat Team Seven, less the 1st Battalion of the 377th Infantry Regiment, was attached to Combat Command A, and the 377th Infantry's 1st Battalion was attached to Combat Command R. An indication of the striking force of the 2nd Armored Division's three combat commands, not including the attachment of Combat Team Seven, lies in the fact that Combat Command A included five battalions of armored infantry, two armored field artillery battalions and normal attachments; Combat Command B included three armored infantry battalions, two armored field artillery battalions and attachments, and Combat Command R included one armored infantry battalion and attachments.

The field order specifically directed Combat Command A to move to its designated assembly area and to cross the Lippe River over previously secured crossings in the vicinity of Hunxe at 0600 March 28, attacking in the direction of Duellen and Hamm. The advance was to be continued as rapidly as possible, Combat Command A blocking all roads to the north until relieved by other elements of the 2nd Armored Division or the 83rd Infantry Division. Routes through the bottleneck of the swamp areas west of Duellen (objective "B") were to be kept open by Combat Command A until relief was effected. The drive was to continue in the direction of Beckum (objective "C"), which was to be secured, as well as the critical road net in the Beckum area. Reconnaissance was to be extended northeast, generally along the Autobahn and the combat command was to be prepared to continue the advance on Berlin.

Combat Command B was to follow Combat Command A across the Rhine, coiling¹ in the assembly area vacated by Combat Command A. Combat Command B was to be prepared to coil west of the Rhine should an assembly area not be available east of the river. On order, the combat command was to be ready to exploit any success of Combat Command A or to develop a second column to move abreast of, on either flank of or to bypass Combat Command A.

Combat Command R was to be prepared either to reinforce Combat Command A or B or for separate commitment.

Combat Command A was to be divided into three fighting units,

¹Coiling is a maneuver used by motorized units when the head of the column is halted for any reason. The most forward unit moves off the road into a field and circles so that the head of the column is finally near the road. Thus, in moving out, the original sequence of units and vehicles is maintained.

Task Forces A, B and R. Initially, Task Force A was to consist solely of 2nd Armored Division elements with no foot infantry dilution. Task Force B similarly was composed of armored units exclusively. Task Force R, on the other hand, included the 377th Infantry Regiment (less the 1st Battalion), the 1st Battalion 66th Armored Regiment, the 920th Field Artillery Battalion and all other components of Combat Team Seven, and was commanded by Colonel Gaillard.

Combat Team Seven, less the 1st Battalion, closed into the Steinhäusen area at 1400 March 27, and an hour and a half later the 1st Battalion had completed movement from Harft to Kleinenbroich, where orders were received attaching it to Combat Command R. The fifty-mile drive north and east into Germany began at midnight the same day, all units of the 2nd Armored Division and its attachments being across the Rhine by 0545 March 29.

At Peddenberg, where it had assembled east of the Rhine, Combat Command A underwent a reorganization which took the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry out of Task Force R and assigned it as a component of Task Force B.¹ Company G of the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry was assigned to the 2nd Battalion 66th Armored Regiment as a tank-riding advance guard of the task force. At the same time, Task Force R also undergoing a reorganization with the creation of Task Force Zeihen, composed of the 1st Battalion 66th Armored Regiment, Company K 377th Infantry and one platoon of the 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion.

Up to this time the 2nd Armored Division had been moving into position for its thrust into enemy-held territory and organizing and reorganizing its forces in order to arrive at the most effective distribution of strength. The time was at hand to strike.

Before dawn on Good Friday, March 30, the two-pronged movement eastward began rolling. (This account is not particularly concerned with the operations of Combat Command B as no elements of the 95th Infantry Division were attached to this unit of the 2nd Armored Division.) Task Force B of Combat Command A led the northern prong of the twin offensive, with units of the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry aligned in the following tactical formation: Company G infantrymen riding medium tanks, two platoons of Company F riding light tanks and interspersed along the column, Company E riding in personnel carriers (two-and-one-half-ton trucks), Company

¹At this point, the composition of Task Force B included the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry (reinforced with one platoon of Company A 320th Engineer Battalion and the 2nd platoon of the 377th Anti-Tank Company), the 2nd Battalion 66th Armored Regiment, Company A 66th Armored Regiment, the 65th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and Company A 17th Armored Engineer Battalion.

H and Headquarters Company in organic transportation and the platoon of the 320th Engineer Battalion in organic transportation.

The column moved thirty-one miles to the northeast before encountering its first obstacle or any sign of opposition. At the Dortmund-Ems Canal, on the outskirts of Luedinghausen, the column was halted by a blown bridge over the waterway. Canal boats tied up nearby were swung crossways and utilized as a temporary bridge for foot elements, Company G crossing and deploying on either side of the site for a distance of 800 yards. Almost immediately the company received machine gun fire. Mortar fire was laid on the enemy positions and the machine guns were silenced. Company G then sent out a platoon to mop up, killing one of the enemy and wounding another. No casualties were sustained by the bridgehead security. Meanwhile, engineers were brought forward and work was begun on a treadway pontoon bridge over the canal. A Luftwaffe strafing attack the next morning inflicted several casualties on the kitchen personnel of the 2nd Battalion Headquarters Company.

Companies E and F, reinforced by Company H, passed through Company G which remained at the canal to guard the bridgehead. The engineers completed their work at 1700, the armor crossed within an hour and Task Force B was rolling eastward again by 1800. Company G was relieved at the bridgehead by Company L of Task Force R which was following behind Task Force B. Upon nearing Ascheberg, seven miles east of Luedinghausen, at midnight, lead elements reported lights flickering in the town which suggested the passage of an enemy convoy. Company G moved out ahead to make a reconnaissance, found no enemy movement and the column moved on toward Drensteinfurt, five miles east of Ascheberg and midway on the north-south highway linking Hamm and Muenster.

While Task Force B was spanning the Dortmund-Ems Canal and moving beyond in the direction of Drensteinfurt, Task Force R moved on a schedule roughly three hours behind, leaving its assembly area in the Peddenberg area at 0900 of March 30. Task Force R went into a coiling area about four miles west of the Dortmund-Ems Canal at 1700, and an hour later sent the 377th Infantry's Company L forward to relieve Company G as bridgehead guard. At 2030 Task Force R resumed its eastward movement, picking up Company L at the canal bridgehead. The force moved steadily throughout the night, going into a coiling area in the vicinity of Ascheberg at 0600 March 31.

Meanwhile, the third element of the 377th Infantry participating in the drive—the 1st Battalion, attached to Combat Command R—left its assembly area at Hunxe at 1100 and proceeded without incident

to Olfen, five miles southwest of Luedinghausen on the Dortmund-Ems Canal, arriving at 1800. A quick reshuffling of forces during the afternoon resulted in the creation of "Striking Force, Combat Command R" consisting of the 3rd Battalion 66th Armored Regiment (less Company C), one platoon of tank destroyers, Companies B and C of the 377th Infantry (supported by elements of Company D) and Company C 17th Armored Engineer Battalion. The remainder of the 1st Battalion was in "Reserve Force, Combat Command R", under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Joseph F. Decker, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry. At 1400 Company B was sent to Luedinghausen on a security mission but encountered no opposition.

The second fire-fight of the operation occurred the second day of the offensive, when resistance developed on the western approaches to Drensteinfurt early the morning of March 31. A reconnaissance jeep leading the Task Force B column was knocked out by fire from the town. The task force commander immediately directed the infantry to move in and clear the town. Control of Companies E and G, which had been attached to tank units, reverted to the 2nd Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Walton, and the attack was launched at 0900 with Company G on the right, Company E on the left. Effective support was given by medium and light tanks, which deployed to protect the flanks of the infantry units. Company G entered the town against very little opposition, but Company E encountered severe mortar fire which came from the Company G zone. Comparatively heavy machine gun and small arms fire also harassed Company E's advance. Company G riflemen killed the enemy mortar crew and opened the route for the final advance into the town, but not before Company E had suffered twenty-two casualties, including the company commander and a platoon leader. Supporting fire from medium tanks set several houses on fire, flushing several score of the defenders who fled to nearby woods, and these were later captured or killed by tank crews. The two infantry companies succeeded in clearing a route through the town by 1200 and were ordered to assemble east of Drensteinfurt. Enemy casualties for the three-hour engagement were estimated at 160 killed and wounded and 250 captured. A large slave labor camp, populated largely by Poles and Russians, was liberated in the course of the operation. By 1545 Task Force B again was driving east, reaching a coiling area in the vicinity of Stromberg, twenty miles east of Drensteinfurt, at 2330.

When Task Force B ran into stiff enemy resistance at Drensteinfurt, Task Force Zeihen (of Task Force R), which had been in a coil-

ing area at Ascheberg, moved forward to assist with the reduction of the German strongpoint. Task Force Zeihen (including Company K 377th Infantry) mopped up scattered resistance for an hour after the 2nd Battalion had pushed on to rejoin its armor east of the town. Drensteinfurt was cleared of all enemy by 1300, and Task Force R resumed its eastward movement behind Task Force B, coiling once at Ennigerloh for an hour and finally pulling into another coiling area in the vicinity of Stromberg at 0130 April 1.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry, attached to Combat Command R, moved out of Olfen at 0430 March 31, arriving at Selm, four miles east, at 0600, and moving on again at 1530 to an assembly area in the vicinity of Walstedde, fifteen miles northeast of Selm, arriving at 2100.

Easter Sunday, April 1, brought the climax to the 377th Infantry's operations with the 2nd Armored Division. It was the first day that elements of all three battalions engaged in fire-fights with the enemy, it was a day that produced the stiffest resistance of the entire drive and it was the last full day that the regimental combat team was associated with the "Hell On Wheels" 2nd Armored Division. Vigorous enemy action was anticipated because of the dangerous terrain which lay ahead. Running from northwest to southeast was the Teutoburger Forest, a heavily forested range of hills rising a thousand feet. Behind this natural barrier lay Bielefeld and Detmold, and open country to the Weser River. Three passes led through the Teutoburger Forest in the zone of Combat Command A, and it was expected that the Germans would attempt a stand in these passes. Each pass contained a town or village.

The curtain-raiser of the day's actions was performed by Company G of the 377th Infantry, which was detached from the 2nd Battalion and Task Force B control at 1800 March 31 to join with one company of medium tanks in the formation of Task Force Warren. The mission of this special task force was to get on the Autobahn a mile southeast of Oelde (three miles northwest of the previous night's coiling area, Stromberg) and drive down it to seize and secure the pass leading through the Teutoburger Forest on the north. The town was Lamershagen.

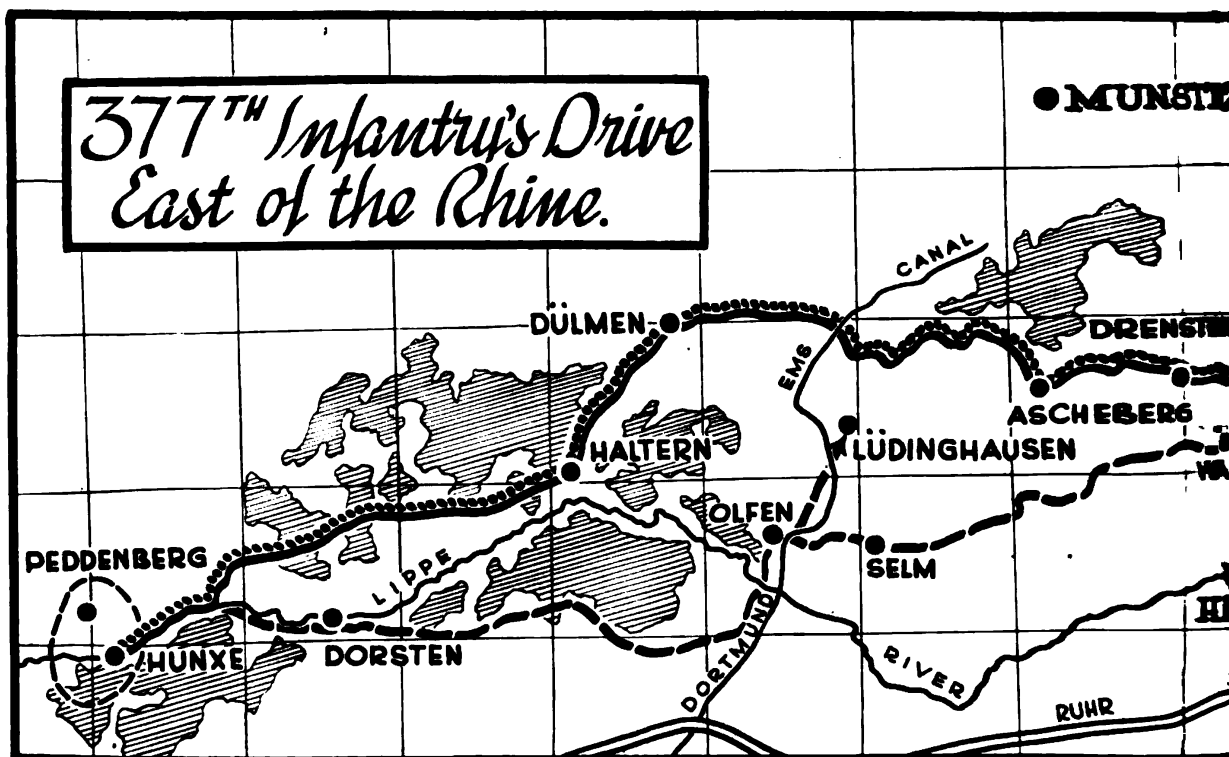
The roaring column of tanks, with infantrymen on top, made swift progress eastward along the four-lane superhighway. The Sunday evening drive had its ludicrous aspects, however. Apparently the enemy was taken completely by surprise. As the tanks and infantrymen drove along they passed a German assembly area where Wehrmacht troops were loading on trucks; they passed civilian cars, wagons and busses; they passed a horse and buggy in which two

German soldiers were riding with a girl. At one road block, after darkness had fallen, a German sergeant in charge of the guard there approached three infantrymen and warned them to be on the alert for an approaching American armored column. Those were his last words. At one point, as the armored column was driving through an underpass on the Autobahn, a German armored reconnaissance unit consisting of three vehicles passed overhead.

At 2100 panzerfaust fire brought the tanks to a halt and the infantry dismounted to clear the way. In the next six hours the riflemen of Company G cleared two and a half miles of the Autobahn and the adjacent woods and fields. At 0330 April 1 the tanks advanced to an assembly area and the infantrymen again advanced on foot to clear a further stretch of three and a half miles until at 0830 the foothills of the Teutoburger Forest were reached. The tanks moved up again and at 1045 the attack on the pass and the town of Lamershausen began with the armor in support. Enemy resistance included panzerfaust and artillery fire as well as machine gun, mortar and small arms fire. One platoon went directly into Lamershausen while the other two moved to the high ground on either side of the town and highway. Because of the nature of the terrain the tanks could not render effective support and in the end the infantrymen had to take the town in house-to-house fighting. The battle ended at 1400 after seventeen hours of continuous fighting.

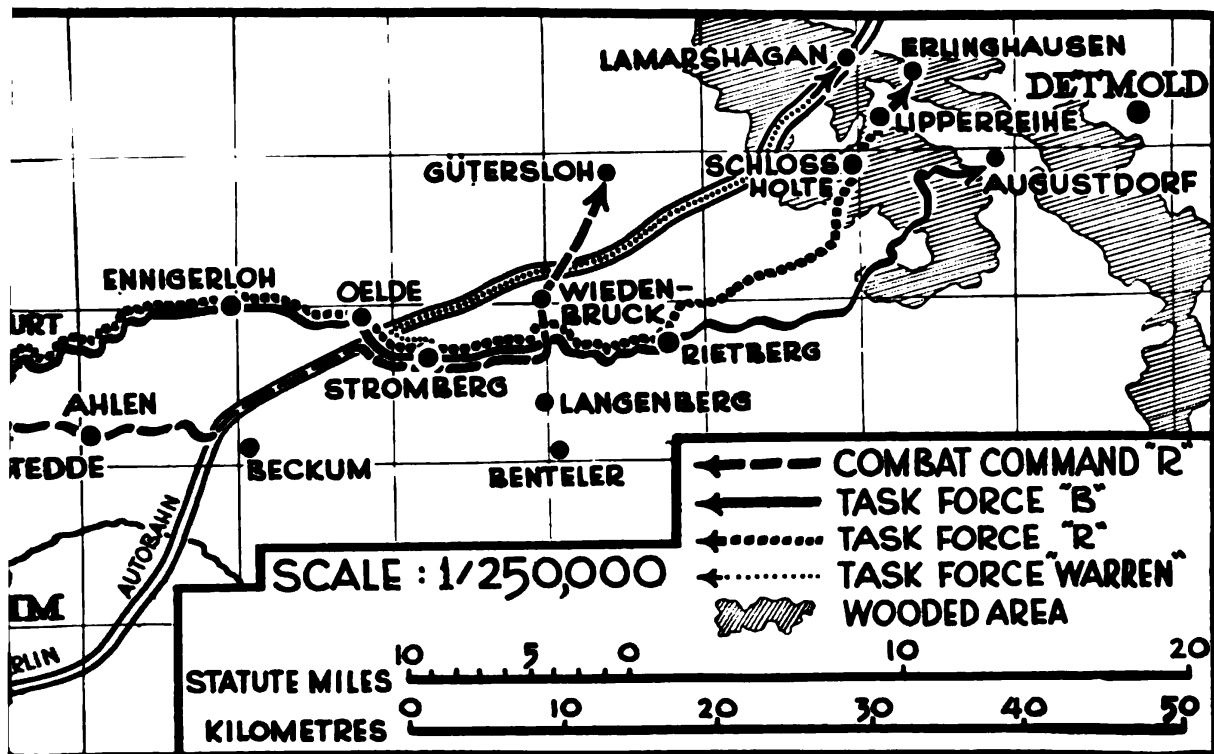
The drive on the central of the three passes, in which nestled the town of Oerlinghausen, thirteen miles northeast of Guetersloh, was made by Task Force R, to which the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry was attached. The group left its coiling area near Oelde at 0830 April 1 with Task Force Zeihen (1st Battalion 66th Armored Regiment and Company K 377th Infantry riding medium tanks) leading. The column moved steadily east with no long halts until Schloss Holte was entered at 1500. Here the force stopped and plans were made for the capture of Dalbke and Lipperreihe, adjoining villages two miles to the northeast and themselves just under two miles from Oerlinghausen. Company I advanced on the right of the road and Company L on the left, with a platoon of Company M in support of each. A mortar platoon and a platoon of tank destroyers gave support to the infantry.

The initial objectives were taken without a fight and the force moved on toward Oerlinghausen. The approach area was wooded to within a hundred yards of the town. The Germans opened up with heavy machine guns and 20-millimeter anti-aircraft guns depressed for horizontal fire. Company I was held up until darkness permitted movement. At 2230 the company skirted a ridge to the south and



circled back on the town, covering four miles to gain 500 yards. Company L jumped off at daybreak April 2 and together with Company I had cleared three-fourths of the town by noon. Enemy troops succeeded in forcing their way back into the town twice during the day, but on both occasions tank destroyer fire forced them out again. Nearly a hundred paratroopers had been brought up by the defenders during the night, and these reinforcements fought with unusual tenacity. At 1530 the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry was relieved by the 1st Battalion 119th Infantry of the 30th Infantry Division. During the operation, eighty-seven of the enemy were taken prisoner, but considerably more were estimated to have been killed. Battalion casualties were five killed and eleven wounded. The battalion departed at 1600 and cleared into an assembly area in the vicinity of Langenberg at 1900 under 377th Infantry control.

The third or southernmost pass through the Teutoburger Forest, which lead to Detmold, was the objective of Task Force B, containing the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry less Company G. The column left its coiling area near Stromberg at 0315 April 1 and moved eastward without incident for five miles in the darkness and early morning light until, at a road junction where a left turn was in order, anti-tank guns were



emplaced to protect the column. Most of the column had passed when three or four German vehicles opened fire on the convoy. One enemy armored vehicle was destroyed by the subsequent 57-millimeter anti-tank gun fire and the others driven off. The convoy was not hit.

The column continued its movement until at 1200 the advance guard, consisting of the 2nd Battalion 66th Armored Regiment and Company F 377th Infantry riding medium tanks, met enemy resistance at Rietberg, seven miles southeast of Guetersloh. Reconnaissance disclosed a German convoy moving from south to north through the town. Infantrymen dismounted from the tanks, entered the town on foot and destroyed the convoy, taking fifty prisoners, all Luftwaffe and service personnel. The trucks were loaded with gasoline and rations and although the volatile fuel poured out on the street, no fire resulted. By 1400 the town had been cleared of enemy troops and the armored column once again resumed its eastward drive. As the drive progressed, another 260 Germans were flushed into the arms of waiting tankmen.

At 1700 the column again was stopped, this time by German tank, panzerfaust and small arms fire coming from Augustdorf, seventeen

miles northeast of Rietberg, and the woods on the western approaches to the town. The 2nd Battalion here reverted to the control of Lieutenant Colonel Walton with the mission of clearing Augustdorf, seizing the high road northeast of the town and clearing the main road through Augustdorf to the gap in the ridge beyond.

The burden of the assault fell upon Companies E and F. Company F moved off the main road to the left in a flanking movement, killing fifteen panzer troops dressed in new leather SS uniforms. Company E attacked through the woods to the right of the highway, drawing heavy machine gun fire but killing twenty and capturing two of the defenders. The western edge of Augustdorf was taken by 2130 and the battalion reorganized to continue the attack during the night. Sporadic fighting continued throughout the night, with houses being flushed in total darkness. A new assault was launched at 0700 April 2. Considerable difficulty was encountered at a road block in town which was guarded by an enemy tank. Artillery support was called for but a malfunctioning radio failed to clear the message and the tank was knocked out with bazooka fire. Light tanks moved in to give close support to the infantry. Company E accounted for fifty more SS troops killed and nine captured. Company F drove a large number of the enemy into a wooded area, where more than a hundred were captured by tankmen and many more were taken by scouting parties composed of Negro drivers of the personnel carriers, message center groups and supply, maintenance and kitchen personnel. A tank maintenance depot containing twelve tanks and an SS rest camp was found in Augustdorf. Four enemy tanks were knocked out in action and the town was cleared by 0930. At 1200, Company G, having completed its mission with Task Force Warren, reverted to battalion control, and at 1600 the 2nd Battalion 119th Infantry of the 30th Division began relief of the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry. Relief was completed at 1900 and the battalion moved to the vicinity of Benteler, closing in at 2030 April 2.

While the actions in and on the approaches to the Teutoburger Forest passes were taking place, the 1st Battalion 377th Infantry, attached to Combat Command R, was directed to move from its assembly area at Walstedde to a new area at Wiedenbrueck, twenty-three miles to the northeast. The movement began at 1100 and the column closed into the new area at 1720. Road reconnaissance was immediately made and road blocks were set up at critical points as far east as Guetersloh. One of the battalion's supply trucks, dispatched to Guetersloh for rations, took a wrong turn on the edge of town and ran into a railroad underpass, where it was ambushed. The truck was knocked out and one man was wounded, but all succeeded in

returning to Wiedenbrueck on foot. The following day, April 2, the 3rd platoon of Company C was sent to the scene of the ambush and in a fire-fight killed four of the enemy and took three prisoners.

But the 2nd Armored Division attachment was over, and Combat Team Seven was resting in preparation for the second phase of the Ruhr campaign, the reduction of the Ruhr Pocket, in which the entire 95th Division was to participate.

THE REDUCTION OF THE RUHR POCKET

A brief summary of the events immediately preceding the 95th Division's Ruhr Pocket commitment is in order. The 97th Infantry Division relieved the Victory Division in the Neuss vicinity at 2340 April 1 and, at the same time, the 95th Division was relieved of operational attachment to the XXII Corps, reverting to the XIX Corps. The Division's displacement from the Ameln area to the Beckum vicinity east of the Rhine began April 1 and continued through April 2. The Division command post closed at Ameln and opened at Beckum at 2100 April 2, and twenty minutes later Combat Team Seven was relieved of attachment to the 2nd Armored Division, reverting to 95th Division control and remaining in the vicinity of Langenberg, where the combat team had assembled upon the completion of its mission with the armored unit. Field Order No. 6 was published April 3, and it was this order that directed the 95th Division's last offensive operation in the second World War, the reduction of a major portion of the Ruhr Pocket.

Pointing out that the First and Ninth U. S. Armies would attack to reduce the Ruhr Pocket, the field order stated that the First Army would attack from the south and east to the Ruhr River and the Ninth Army would attack from the west and north to the same river. The Ninth Army's XVI Corps was to attack to the east from south of the Lippe River and north of the Ruhr River. The XIX Corps was to attack south with the 95th Division on the right (west) flank and the 8th Armored Division on the left, initially, to clear the area north of the line Ruhr and Moehne rivers in zone. In the beginning, 95th Division attachments included the 547th A.A.A. Battalion, the 709th Tank Battalion, the 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 15th Cavalry Group.

The Victory Division was directed to relieve the 83rd Infantry Division, command of the zone to pass to General Twaddle at 1800 April 3. At 0630 April 4, the division was to attack south, forcing a crossing of the Lippe River and the adjacent Lippe-Seiten Canal

and eventually securing the line formed by the Ruhr and Moehne rivers. Direct liaison was to be maintained with the XVI Corps on the right to arrange no-fire lines. On the Division's right was the 75th Infantry Division of the XVI Corps, which was holding the line Rhine-Herne Canal as the 95th Division relieved the 83rd Division. The 75th Division was preparing to attack south with three regiments abreast the morning of April 4. The 8th Armored Division, on the left, had advanced as far as Eikeloh, five miles southeast of Lippstadt, during April 3 and was preparing to push further south.

Within the Division, the missions were assigned as follows: The 378th Infantry, with Company B 709th Tank Battalion and Company B 320th Medical Battalion attached, was to force the crossing of the Lippe River and the Lippe-Seiten Canal, to seize the great German railroad center of Hamm and to clear the regimental zone of all enemy. One narrow bridgehead already had been secured across the Lippe River and the Lippe-Seiten Canal by elements of the 83rd Division's 331st Infantry. But the Germans were offering stiff resistance at Hamm and counterattacked the 83rd Division's lean bridgehead twice, although both counterattacks were successfully repelled.

The 379th Infantry, with Companies C of the 709th Tank Battalion and the 320th Medical Battalion attached, was to attack on the left east of the 378th Infantry, forcing a crossing of the Lippe River (the Lippe-Seiten Canal did not extend as far east as the 379th Infantry's zone) and clear the regimental zone of all enemy. The regiment was to be prepared to change the direction of its attack to seize Soest, or to continue the attack in the western portion of the Division zone to the Ruhr River on Division order.

The 377th Infantry, initially in Division reserve, was to move to an assembly area in the Beckum vicinity April 4 and to be prepared, on Division order, to attack, passing through elements of the 379th Infantry, to clear the western portion of the Division zone to the Ruhr River, or to seize Soest and clear the eastern portion of the Division zone to the Moehne River. The 15th Cavalry Group was directed to reconnoiter the north bank of the Lippe River from the Dortmund-Ems Canal on the west as far east as Hamm, destroying all enemy crossing the Lippe in this zone. The cavalry group was to be prepared, as the area was uncovered by elements of the XVI Corps, to cross the Lippe River and reconnoiter the west flank of the Division zone south of the Lippe and to maintain contact with the 378th Infantry on the group's left flank.

Initially, as pointed out earlier in this chapter, enemy forces sur-

rounded by the First and Ninth U. S. Armies were estimated to number approximately 100,000, but shortly after the drive began the estimate was increased to 125,000, including both combat and service troops (and, when the campaign had ended, it was found that more than 325,000 prisoners had been taken from the Ruhr). Identifications, strength and compositions of German units in the zone of the Division's advance were unknown before the attack. It was believed that the Germans would continue to counterattack, as they had done twice in Hamm in the twenty-four-hour period preceding the 95th Division's relief of the 83rd Division, in the hope of making a breakthrough. Failing this, it was believed the enemy would fight delaying actions in urban areas and in terrain offering good defensive positions. In the Division zone, it was anticipated that the points most likely to be defended were Hamm, Soest and the ridge north of the Ruhr River.

The Division's Ruhr campaign lasted eleven days and progress was rapid throughout. Against varying resistance, Hamm was cleared by the 378th Infantry April 7, while the 377th Infantry was making a lightning stab to the south to seize Soest. At this time, the XIX Corps was fighting in two directions at once, being split between a Berlin-aimed drive to the east and the Ruhr Pocket operation to the south and southwest. Accordingly, the XIX Corps set up Task Force Twaddle, assigning it the latter mission. Composed of the 95th Infantry and the 8th Armored Divisions, all attachments thereto and a vast amount of attached and supporting artillery. General Twaddle also set up Task Force Faith, composed of the 377th Infantry and the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment (of the 17th Airborne Division) and attached troops. Task Force Faith's mission was to attack from the east, clearing the enemy from the pocket formed by the Ruhr and Moehne rivers (which join at Neheim rivers). Infantry Regiments, capturing the great German industrial city of Dortmund April 13, while Task Force Faith, having successfully completed its mission, was dissolved at noon of the same day. Midway in its operations, on April 10, the attached 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, captured one of Germany's high diplomatic figures, Baron Franz von Papen. Following the capture of Dortmund, Task Force Twaddle turned south and drove to the Ruhr River, thus completing its assigned mission of clearing the enemy from its portion of the Ruhr Pocket.

The detailed discussion here of the 95th Division's Ruhr Pocket operations is divided into five sections in the following order: the

378th Infantry Regiment's battle for Hamm, the 379th Infantry's attack south and southwest from April 4 to the formation of Task Force Twaddle, the 377th Infantry's capture of Soest, the operations of Task Force Twaddle and the operations of Task Force Faith.

THE BATTLE FOR HAMM

In the 378th Infantry Regiment's after action report for April, 1945, Colonel Samuel L. Metcalfe, regimental commander, pointed out that his plan of attack in the Hamm bridgehead area had been "to make a holding attack at Hamm, patrol the center section of our zone and make a strong attack on a narrow front on the left (east) of the regimental zone in the vicinity of a railroad bridge. After forcing a crossing, the enemy flank was to be rolled up to the west in the orthodox, copy book manner. The plan was carried through effectively and the results equalled the expectations."

At 1030 April 3, the 378th Infantry Regiment began displacement from an assembly area in the vicinity of Walstedde to relieve the 83rd Infantry Division's 331st Infantry, which earlier had forced a small bridgehead across the Lippe River and the Lippe-Seiten Canal. The relief was completed at 0035 April 4, but not without incident as the Germans counterattacked the 331st Infantry troops in the bridgehead area with an estimated two to three hundred infantry at 1800 April 3. The enemy's concern over this bridgehead was considerable; the Germans having counterattacked a day earlier in undetermined strength. But the counterattack of April 3 was anticipated as the XIX Corps had intercepted a German radio message indicating an intended counterattack to regain a railroad station in an undisclosed location. Believing this to be at Hamm, the Corps notified both the 95th and 83rd Divisions prior to the attack. Elements of the 95th Division Artillery which were already registered on the counterattack area supported the 83rd Division in successfully repelling the German force.

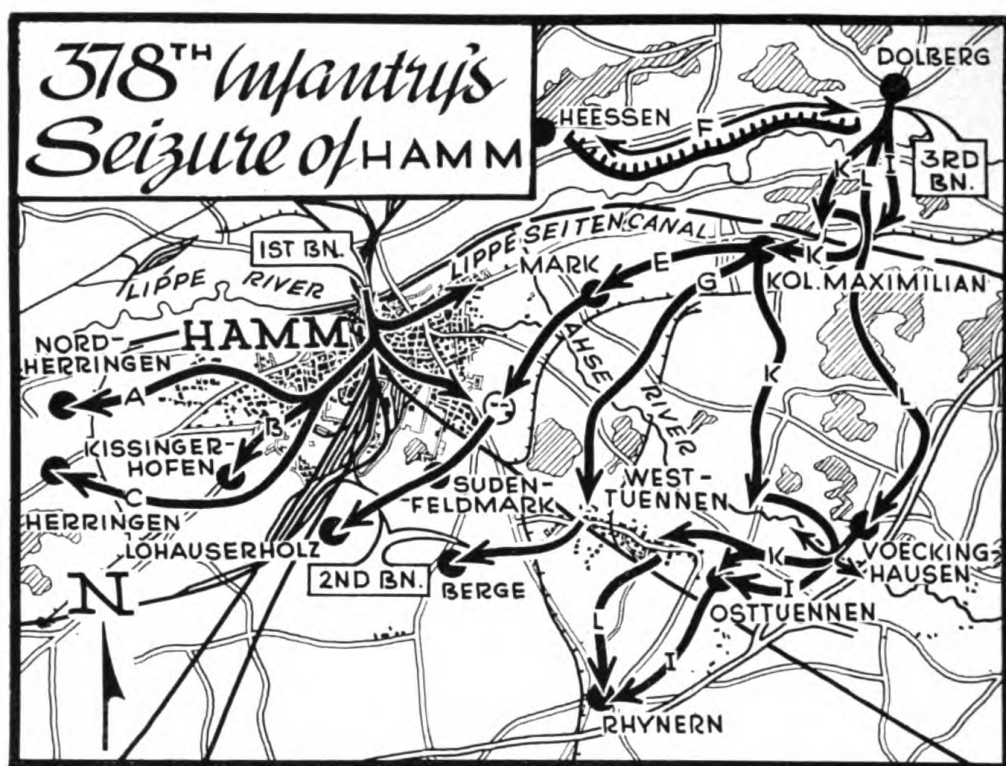
As the regiment prepared to attack, the 1st Battalion was on the right (west) flank holding the narrow bridgehead over the Lippe River and canal in the city of Hamm, the 3rd Battalion was on the left flank and the 2nd Battalion was in reserve but holding the river line between the 1st and 3rd Battalions. The 1st Battalion's bridgehead area included a railroad bridge (viaduct) and the Hamm railroad depot. Initially, the battalion's mission was to show strength while the rest of the regiment pushed south of Hamm, to the east, and

came up behind the city. The 3rd Battalion, in the vicinity of Dolberg, held a front along the Lippe River and its mission was to drive south initially, turning southwest to cut off Hamm from the rear. The 2nd Battalion was occupying the Lippe River line from the vicinity of Heessen to the Dolberg area. The 2nd Battalion commander assigned this task to Company F and the remainder of the battalion remained in regimental reserve two miles south of Ahlen.

During the hours of darkness the morning of April 4, Lieutenant Colonel Ewel E. Eubank, 1st Battalion commander, brought Company B across the Lippe River and Canal and thus had his entire battalion in the bridgehead area before daylight. Shortly after 0600, a concentration of enemy troops was observed preparing for an attack and the Germans were firing a heavy concentration of panzerfaust, mortar and artillery into the American-held bridgehead. At the same time, from the east, the Germans hit the 1st Battalion bridgehead with a counterattack of one truck loaded with demolitions and two armored half-tracks carrying infantrymen. The German attack was supported by one tank which was firing from the eastern edge of the city. The mission of the counterattack, obviously, was to destroy the underpass in the 378th Infantry's bridgehead. The underpass was a long tunnel beneath several railroad tracks and was defended by one platoon of Company C (one squad inside the tunnel and the rest deployed in foxholes on either side guarding the approaches). There was considerable fog and little daylight at this hour and, accordingly, the Germans advanced to within a hundred yards of the underpass before being detected. When Division troops opened fire on the attacking force, the German tank began firing directly into the mouth of the underpass, wounding most of the squad within. In spite of the heavy tank fire, the platoon held its ground and built a large volume of small arms fire.

Private First Class George A. Hyatt fired his bazooka at the lead vehicle carrying the demolitions at about the same time that the vehicle hit a mine protecting the approach to the underpass. The truck exploded with tremendous force, destroying the two trailing half-tracks and killing all Germans in these vehicles. The force of the explosion was so great that some casualties were inflicted on 1st Battalion troops. The entire action lasted about half an hour and Company C suffered twenty-two casualties in repelling the counterattack. Assuming that the Germans were assembling other troops to follow up the expected demolition, Lieutenant Colonel Eubank called for artillery on German positions which temporarily forestalled any further offensive action.

It was learned that most of the opposing Germans were members of



the 116th Panzer Division, and they were well trained, disciplined troops whose morale was still comparatively high. Also in Hamm was a battalion of more than 200 SS men (all but four of whom were killed by the 378th Infantry by April 7, the SS men preferring to fight until killed rather than surrender), some Volkssturm, the Hamm police force, consisting of 150 well armed men, and a battalion of young Germans. These latter were especially trained for the purpose of counterattacking to regain the Hamm bridgehead and, if possible, to hold open a German escape route.

Company B attacked at 0800 and had considerable difficulty breaking out of the enemy ring around the bridgehead area. Five men of Company B were killed and several wounded in pushing out of the depot, but after an advance of about 400 yards against extremely stubborn resistance, the company appeared to have pierced the defensive ring and the Germans seemed to be disorganized. Simultaneous with the attack of Company B, Company C attacked parallel to and on the left of Company B. Initially, heavy machine gun fire was met which was covering the streets along which Company C intended to advance. Private First Class Carroll M. Johnson left the building in which he had sought cover, ran into the street and

knocked out a German machine gun crew which was going into position. With this, the company was able to advance a few buildings until an excellent artillery observation post was found. Artillery was immediately brought to bear on every possible German strongpoint and fleeing Germans were dropped by machine gun fire. The resistance broke and the company was able to go forward three blocks and to spread out three blocks in width. Here the company set up defensive positions. During the attack, more than 200 prisoners were captured as Company C suffered six casualties, including two killed. By noon the offensive action had ended and Companies B and C began sending combat patrols forward to capture prisoners.

Throughout the day, Company A held the west side of what had been the bridgehead before the attack of Companies B and C. Early in the afternoon, a captured civilian policeman volunteered to lead a patrol to the civil police headquarters to urge the police force to surrender. Accordingly, a patrol worked its way through sniper fire to the police headquarters. The commanding officer, an SS lieutenant colonel, was willing to surrender but would not do so because the patrol did not have enough strength to protect his "honor".

With the end of April 4 and the 1st Battalion's first day of Ruhr Pocket commitment, the Hamm bridgehead was well expanded from the narrow foothold inherited from the 331st Infantry. In pushing into the vast Hamm railroad marshalling yards, the battalion had overrun almost a thousand boxcars filled with enemy foodstuffs, supplies and ammunition.

Throughout April 5, the 1st Battalion held its bridgehead, making no offensive probes, but the battalion's combat patrols penetrated four and five blocks into the enemy-held portion of the city, meeting only light small arms fire. In contrast to the bitter opposition of the previous day, the Germans showed a willingness to give up to these patrols and it was evident that the enemy was withdrawing troops from the city.

The 1st Battalion returned to the offensive again at 0600 April 6 as Company A attacked to seize an apartment building in the eastern outskirts of Hamm. This building and another were taken easily after artillery fire was placed on the buildings, more than 200 prisoners being taken from both. A patrol from Company C made contact with the 378th Infantry's regimental scouts on the southeastern outskirts of Hamm at 1030. By noon, the eastern half of the city had been cleared by patrols and by mid-afternoon the battalion had fully occupied the eastern half of Hamm. Some panzerfaust fire continued to come in from the western half of the city, but German artillery appeared to have been silenced for the time being.



Above: The Hamm railroad bridge captured intact by the 378th Infantry's 1st Battalion after a bitter fight.

Below: A file of German prisoners captured at Hamm.



Above: Wreckage in the great Hamm rail yards.

Below: A 378th Infantryman searches out a German sniper in the Hamm rail yards.



A patrol of the 378th Infantry Regiment moves past a roadblock in Hamm.

The 1st Battalion attacked again at 0730 April 7 with Companies A and C pushing west to clear that portion of Hamm. The city was entirely cleared of the enemy by 1100 and the battalion had pushed a thousand yards west of Hamm before noon. Company B was committed at this time to clear any areas within the city that were bypassed and at 1800 the battalion again attacked to the west with Company A on the right, Company B in the center and Company C on the left. No resistance was encountered as Company B occupied Kissingerhofen, Company A took Nord Herringen and Company C occupied Herringen, all small towns west of Hamm.

In the meantime, while the 1st Battalion was successfully taking Hamm, the 3rd Battalion was driving generally southwest to cut off the city from the rear. The battalion relieved elements of the 331st Infantry in the Dolberg vicinity during the hours of darkness April 3. Dolberg, seven miles northeast of Hamm, was less than a mile north of the Lippe River and was on the regiment's left flank. Under cover of darkness the night of April 3, the battalion effected a sneak over the Lippe River. The 1st platoon of Company I crossed the Lippe at this point and met no opposition whatsoever. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons followed and attacked abreast into the woods and a few buildings between the river and the Lippe-Seiten Canal to the south. The company's mission was to capture the village of Haaren and to continue the attack to seize the railroad bridge over the Lippe-Seiten Canal which was directly south of Haaren. Haaren fell without opposition but the advance was halted when patrols neared the bridge spanning the canal, for it was so well defended that the company was forced to withdraw. Meanwhile, Company K followed Company I across the Lippe River bridge and moved west and south to secure the right of the battalion zone.

Shortly after 0500 April 4, Company L, which had been in battalion reserve, crossed the river and took up positions between Companies I and K. Prior to this, Companies I and K had attacked and advanced to the canal bank, thus securing the north bank of the canal in the battalion zone. Three well defended bridges were in the battalion zone: The railroad bridge and a highway bridge fronting Company I and a highway bridge fronting Company K. All bridges were defended by panzerfaust and automatic weapon fire. It was decided that an attempt would be made to seize the two bridges fronting Company I and, accordingly, the battalion attacked in the early afternoon. Company L attacked through Company I to seize the railroad bridge. An estimated seventy-five Germans held the southern approach to the bridge and were well dug in. An assault group of one and a half squads was to take the bridge, to be followed



Two Nazis sprawl dead in a pile of rubble in Hamm while a 378th Infantryman covers a buddy's advance.

by the rest of the Company L which would fan out on either side. But the assault group met extremely heavy panzerfaust, small arms and automatic weapon fire and was forced to withdraw. Tank destroyer and mortar fire was then directed on the Germans to pin them down and a full platoon assaulted the bridge again, succeeding in crossing. This turned the tide and the Germans surrendered readily. Seventy-eight were captured in a few minutes. Company L suffered six casualties in the attack, including two killed. The company then moved on to its objective, a high wooded area east of Kol. Maximilian. The objective was taken without opposition and defensive positions were established by 1830.

The highway bridge which was to be seized was a short distance east of the railroad bridge taken by Company L and was the objective of Company I. The company crossed the bridge against comparatively light opposition and with few casualties, captured one officer and sixty-eight enlisted men in a small wooded area immediately



An infantryman jumps a Hamm roadblock.

south of the captured highway bridge, and here the company remained throughout the night.

Although no attempt was made to take the bridge fronting Company K on the right of the battalion zone, nevertheless it figured in the day's operations. At 1400 an enemy force of an estimated fifty men crossed the canal to the west of Company K in the gap between the company and the 1st Battalion. The German force advanced toward the Company K sector with the obvious mission of resecuring the northern approach to the highway bridge.

"The enemy tried to play smart," Captain James R. Showers, company commander, said in describing the action. "They sent a patrol of eight men down to the bridge where they ran into our company. Four of the enemy were captured and the other four were wounded. We immediately sent out one platoon of infantry followed by two tank destroyers with the mission of locating and killing or capturing the enemy force which had crossed the canal. The enemy was located and found to be already withdrawing. Our platoon pursued them to the battalion boundary and then the tank destroyers opened up with their 90-millimeter guns and 50-caliber machine guns, killing or wounding about half of the enemy force. The remainder escaped across the canal."

Thus, with the end of the day's fighting, the battalion held a small bridgehead across the Lippe-Seiten Canal and two of the three bridges in the battalion zone.

Early the morning of April 5 the battalion attacked again with Company K crossing the railroad bridge secured by Company L a day earlier. Once across the canal, the company swung to the right and moved west along the canal with the mission of seizing Kol. Maximilian. The attack was preceded by a fifteen-minute two-battalion artillery preparation. The attack began at 0545 and the town was taken without opposition because of the excellent pre-attack artillery fire. The company reorganized in the town and moved out at 1000 on the right of the battalion zone against negligible opposition. More than 40 prisoners were taken from occasional small pockets during the advance. The company's advance was rapid, moving more than three miles south in five hours. The company held up its advance on the northern bank of the Ahse River (just north of Ost-Tuennen) where it organized defensive positions.

From its position east of Kol. Maximilian, Company L attacked south at 0700. Company L's advance was also rapid and by 1300 the company had cleared the enemy from its zone as far southeast as the Autobahn, which marked the company's left boundary, against little opposition. The advance continued to the south, Voekinghausen

being taken without a fight. Here the company temporarily held up while its 2nd Platoon and a machine gun section advanced to the north bank of the Ahse River to build up a volume of fire, German riflemen having been observed on the south side of the river. One squad waded and swam across the river (which was about ten yards wide and four feet deep) while the rest of the platoon kept the enemy pinned down with heavy machine gun, automatic weapon and small arms fire. The enemy's reaction was typical to that which had been shown since the morning of April 4. As soon as the squad had crossed the Germans either surrendered or fled. The rest of the platoon crossed immediately and a bridgehead was well established by 1800. As the entire battalion was to use this crossing point later, it was necessary to build a small bridge of some sort, so a wagon was found in a nearby field and this formed the center span of the foot-bridge. Four barrels and a few barn doors completed the bridge which was subsequently crossed by all foot elements of the battalion. Before midnight, the 3rd Platoon relieved the 2nd Platoon at the bridgehead and the rest of the company remained in Voekinghausen.

The morning of April 6 the battalion attacked to capture Ost-Tuennen and here the battalion encountered the most severe resistance that had been met since April 4. Company L was to hold its Ahse River bridgehead while Companies I and K attacked through the bridgehead to take Ost-Tuennen from the east, enveloping the town. Company K began its assault at 0545 with the 1st and 3rd Platoons abreast, forming the right pincer of the coordinated seizure. Immediately after the jump-off, the company encountered vicious opposition centered in a farm house in the path of advance. A heavy volume of small arms and automatic weapon fire temporarily halted the advance. Accordingly, an attack by marching fire was directed. The assault lasted ten minutes and the marching fire attack resulted in the development of a sufficient volume of fire to take the farmhouse. Seven casualties were suffered in the attack of the farmhouse but seventy-five prisoners were captured and an estimated ten Germans killed. The company reorganized and continued the attack at 0930, again with marching fire. Small arms fire harassed the company until a foothold was won in Ost-Tuennen, but then the enemy's resistance broke and the rest of the town was cleared without firing a shot. Company K took more than 50 prisoners in finally clearing the town.

Company I, forming the left arm of the attack, began its attack at daylight from its position south of Voekinghausen. One small group of buildings halfway to Ost-Tuennen yielded a German officer and sixty-four enlisted men without a fight. The company entered

Ost-Tuennen against no opposition. Ost-Tuennen was cleared before noon April 6 and the 3rd Battalion was directed to advance no further southwest than the Hamm-Soest railroad.

The town of Rhynern, two miles southwest of Ost-Tuennen, was the battalion's objective April 7. During the night of April 6-7, two one-hour artillery concentrations were placed on the town. Company I was to attack on the left, Company L on the right. Company L moved out from West-Tuennen (part of which was cleared the preceding evening) at 0400, surprising twenty Germans asleep in shacks in a field southwest of West-Tuennen. Also in the field were fourteen 88-millimeter guns, several dual-barreled 20-millimeter guns, several machine guns and a radar unit, all of which were seized. The company continued toward Rhynern, meeting no opposition until reaching a small woods on the northern edge of the town, where stiff close-in fighting was met from an estimated twenty-five fanatic members of the Hitler Jugend. More than ten of the teen-age youths were killed and eight captured in the ensuing fire-fight, the rest of the defenders retiring to the south. The wooded area was secured by 1000, but Company L had two men killed and six wounded in the fight. The company reorganized in preparation for securing Rhynern, setting up a covering force on the south edge of the woods while one platoon worked its way across an open field and into the town. Meanwhile, the attack of Company I on the left had been somewhat less eventful, although many prisoners were taken as the company advanced in the direction of Rhynern. The two companies successfully cleared the town in the early afternoon against comparatively light resistance in the town itself. Following the capture of Rhynern, the battalion continued the attack to the southwest, meeting only light, scattered resistance. After advancing a few hundred yards west of Rhynern, the battalion remained in position during the night.

Thus the 378th Infantry Regiment's Ruhr Pocket operations for the period April 3-7 have been related with the exception of the 2nd Battalion, initially in regimental reserve. During the afternoon of April 3, the battalion's Company F had relieved elements of the 331st Infantry along the north bank of the Lippe River from Heessen on the west to the Dolberg vicinity on the east. The remainder of the battalion was in an assembly area two miles south of Ahlen. Throughout April 4, the battalion remained in regimental reserve as Company F continued to hold the Heessen-Dolberg river line. Company G, however, moved to the bridgehead over the Lippe River south of Dolberg to protect the area against a possible counterattack. Still in regimental reserve, the 2nd Battalion was directed to move to Kol. Maximilian the morning of April 5, closing into the area in the early

afternoon. Because of the considerable advance of the 3rd Battalion at this time, it was no longer necessary for Company F to hold the Lippe River line or for Company G to protect the Dolberg bridge-head. The morning of April 6 the 2nd Battalion returned to the offensive, taking over the northern portion of the 3rd Battalion zone while that battalion attacked to the south. The 2nd Battalion was to push to the west-southwest toward the southern outskirts of Hamm, in which the 1st Battalion was fighting. The battalion attacked at 0830 with Company E on the right (north) and Company G on the left.

Company G's objective for the day was the western half of West-Tuennen (the eastern half being in the 3rd Battalion zone). Advancing toward the town, the company met resistance from two groups of houses a mile north of West-Tuennen. Supported by a section of tank destroyers, the houses were taken against "fairly stiff" resistance, the company pushed on to enter West-Tuennen before noon and the western half of the town was secured shortly thereafter. Company G took eighty-nine prisoners in West-Tuennen, suffering only two casualties once the town had been entered. Two small counterattacks hit the company in West-Tuennen. At 1500 an estimated platoon of German infantrymen regained a row of houses on the western edge of the town in an apparent attempt to cut off the company's outpost lines. Ten men from the 2nd Platoon re-cleared these houses in little more than an hour. At dusk the Germans returned again. This time the tank destroyers were called upon to fire into each of the houses now occupied by Germans and with this the enemy withdrew.

Company E, meanwhile, captured thirty-two willing prisoners shortly after the attack began. The village of Mark, two miles west of Kol. Maximilian, was taken by Company E at 0945 and shortly thereafter contact was made with the regimental scouts who were protecting the 2nd Battalion's open right flank. The company reached its final objective for the day by noon, a small community just north of the Hamm-Soest railroad on the southeastern edge of Hamm. Company F, in battalion reserve, sent patrols to the west of the railroad and received panzerfaust fire from Suedenfeldmark, a community on the southern edge of Hamm.

The battalion made no further advance April 6 but attacked early the morning of April 7, swiftly driving west as Berge and Lohausenholz were captured. Resistance was spotty throughout the day's drive as the battalion drove far enough west to come abreast of the 1st Battalion on the right.

Task Force Twaddle was organized at 1200 April 7 and, accord-

ingly, a small portion of the 378th Infantry Regiment's operations from April 3 through April 7 occurred as a component of Task Force Twaddle (the operations of which are discussed in detail later in this chapter). In this five-day period, however, the regiment had captured the vital German rail center of Hamm, long an allied air target, and from east of Hamm had seized a Lippe River bridgehead and forced a bridgehead over the Lippe Seiten Canal, then pushing south and west to encircle Hamm from the rear. At the end of the period, the regiment held a line running generally from Nord Herringen on the north to a point a few hundred yards west of Rhynern on the south.

THE 379th INFANTRY IN THE RUHR POCKET

April 3 through 7

The 379th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Colonel Robert L. Bacon, completed relief of elements of the 83rd Infantry Division along the north bank of the Lippe River at 1645 April 4. The regiment's zone extended from the vicinity of Ost-Dolberg on the west to a point two miles southeast of Lippborg on the east. On the regiment's right flank was the 378th Infantry Regiment, and on the left was the 8th Armored Division. (Actually a narrow gap existed between the regiment and the armored division, but the 95th Reconnaissance Troop and the attached Company D of the 709th Tank Battalion outposted and screened this area.) As outlined earlier, the regiment's attachments included Company C of the 709th Tank Battalion and Company C of the 320th Medical Battalion. Supporting units included Company C of the 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company C of the 320th Engineer Battalion. The regiment's mission, as directed in Field Order No. 6, was to attack in zone with two battalions abreast, forcing a crossing of the Lippe River and clearing the regimental zone of all enemy. The regiment was to be prepared to change the direction of its attack, on Division order, turning to the southeast to seize Soest, or to continue the attack into the western portion of the Division zone to the Ruhr River. As will be seen, the latter mission was the one ultimately accomplished by the regiment, as the Soest attack was given to the 377th Infantry. One water obstacle which lay in the path of the 378th Infantry's advance, the Lippe-Seiten Canal, extended only a short distance into the 379th Infantry's zone, and thus a crossing of this waterway was not necessary for 379th Infantry troops.

The regiment's plan called for the 3rd Battalion to attack on the right (west) astride the Autobahn which passed through the 379th Infantry's zone, the 1st Battalion to attack on the left and the 2nd Battalion to be in regimental reserve. Before the attack and during

the night of April 3-4, 379th Infantry patrols crossed the Lippe with the mission of capturing prisoners, as pre-attack enemy information was extremely meager. One such patrol crossed in the vicinity of Heintrop, on the south bank of the Lippe and opposite Lippborg and encountered a German outpost guarding a tank obstacle. In the ensuing fire-fight, two of the enemy were killed and two prisoners were brought back to the regimental command post for interrogation. From these prisoners came the regiment's first information concerning German dispositions south of the Lippe. It was learned that Heintrop and the adjacent town of Hultrop were occupied by approximately seventy German troops, most of whom had had little training and none of whom had any desire to fight. Another of the regiment's patrols captured three prisoners, and these Germans gave information concerning the dispositions of some German artillery. No bridges were intact in the regiment's zone, so the crossing of the Lippe River was to be accomplished in assault boats.

The attack was launched at 0300 as elements of Company A and combat scouts crossed the river at Lippborg with the mission of securing a bridgehead, thus making it possible for an infantry support bridge to be built. The enemy was apparently taken by surprise, for only negligible resistance was encountered and the bridgehead was quickly established by Company A's 1st platoon while the combat scouts set up a defensive line along the railroad directly south of the crossing site. Immediately after the bridgehead was secured, the 320th Engineer Battalion's Company C installed an infantry support bridge. At 0445, the Germans placed 88-millimeter fire on the bridge site, but the fire was ineffective. Company B crossed the bridge at 0530 and moved into the right of the 1st Battalion zone, and ten minutes later Company C crossed, moving into the left of the zone. By 0800 all of Company A, most of the regiment's anti-tank guns, many vehicles, the 1st Battalion Headquarters and the battalion aid station were on the south bank of the Lippe. Companies B and C, pushing southwest, encountered little opposition in taking their first objectives, the towns of Buninghausen and Heintrop, respectively. The two companies immediately pushed on toward their final objective for the day, which was that portion of the Hamm-Soest railroad between Kirchwelter and Borgeln. Company B pushed west quickly, seizing the road junction at Vellinghausen, then turning southeast to capture Nateln, then turning southwest to drive on the towns of Kirchwelter and Welter. Both towns were captured by mid-afternoon, and throughout the rest of the day the company cleared small pockets of resistance in the area. The company occupied Kirch-

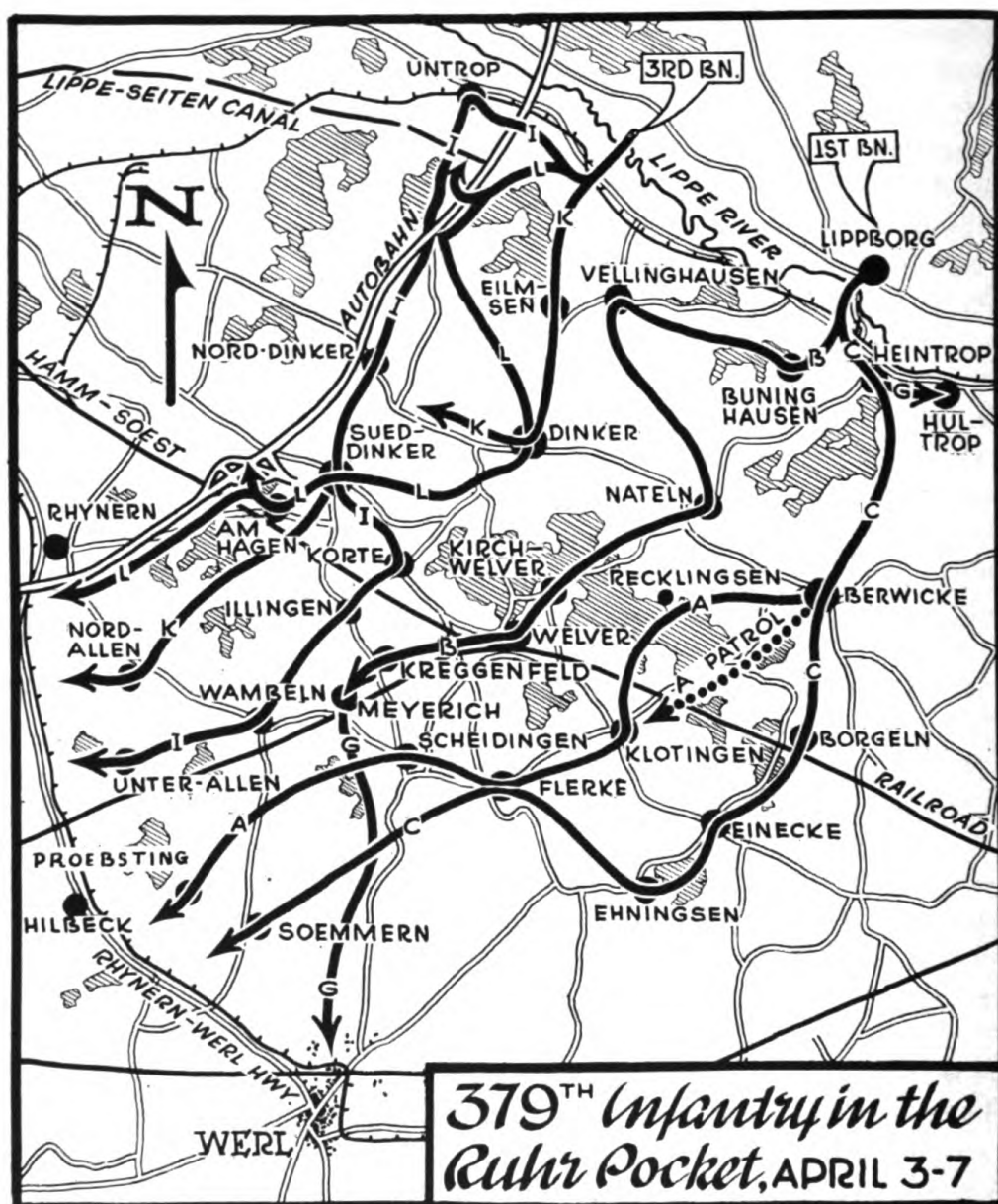
welver during the night of April 4-5 and repelled one small counter-attack at Welver just before midnight.

In Welver, however, Company B had suffered its first casualties of its Ruhr Pocket fighting. Captain Angelo Paciotti, company commander, First Lieutenant William Root, Sergeant Henry Radke and Private First Class James Kane were standing close to a building in the center of the village questioning a prisoner. Unnoticed by the Company B men, four German soldiers rounded the corner of the building. The prisoner, seeing his fellow Germans, suddenly pushed Paciotti into the cellar of the building, momentarily stunning him. The German followed Captain Paciotti into the cellar and the two began a hand-to-hand fight. Root quickly followed the German into the cellar to give Paciotti a hand, but Root was killed a minute later when one of the four Germans blindly fired a single shot into the cellar. Shortly thereafter, Paciotti killed his opponent and left the cellar, only to find that the four Germans had killed Radke and wounded Kane. (Sergeant Radke, incidentally, was a medical aid man and was plainly marked as such.) Meanwhile, men of the 2nd Platoon heard the fight and came running up. The Germans began withdrawing, two of them being wounded but escaping.

The foregoing action was not exceptional or unusual, but was described in detail because it was typical of the type of fighting encountered by the Division in the Ruhr Pocket (and, frequently, elsewhere). One American officer and one enlisted man were killed in the brief action just described, one man was wounded. In a narrative of this nature, it is not possible to describe all such actions. The purpose of relating this single incident is to indicate what frequently happens when this story states that a certain town or village has been captured against "little opposition". Americans—and more frequently Germans—were killed and wounded in all such operations and the detailed story of this single Company B action serves as an example.

Company C's progress on the battalion's left flank was somewhat slower. The company began pushing southeast to seize Berwicke against stiff resistance. At 1215 the company was counterattacked at Berwicke by an estimated fifty enemy infantrymen, but this was repulsed in less than a quarter of an hour. Two hours later the town was cleared of the enemy. The company continued south and drove to its final objective along the railroad with little difficulty.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Platoon of Company A, which had secured the Lippe bridgehead during the hours of darkness the morning of April 4, was given the mission of securing the town of Hultrop and the bat-



talion's exposed left flank. Second Lieutenant Robert C. Hughes, platoon leader, described the action as follows:

"My platoon jumped off from Heintrop at about 1000. We began to receive small arms and automatic weapon fire from dug-in positions on the western outskirts of Hultrop when we reached the eastern outskirts of Heintrop. The fire became more intense as we advanced and mortar fire began coming in. My platoon was pinned down. We could not move forward without supporting artillery and mortar fire. I notified battalion of my situation. They decided it was a company job to take Hultrop. We remained in position until about 1700 when Company G passed through us to take the town."

Intermittent 88-millimeter fire had been coming into the bridge-head site from the vicinity of Hultrop throughout the day. A treadway bridge had been completed over the Lippe at Lippborg by 1500 and two platoons of tank destroyers and all of the 379th Infantry's organic vehicles crossed before the fire from Hultrop destroyed the bridge. Engineers went to work to repair the bridge, but the immediate necessity of seizing Hultrop was obvious and, accordingly, the mission was assigned to the reserve 2nd Battalion.

The 2nd Battalion had closed into the vicinity of Lippborg shortly afternoon of April 4 and at the same time Company G began crossing to the south bank of the Lippe. At 1715 the company was directed to attack to seize Hultrop. The attack began at 1740, after an artillery preparation was fired by the 359th Field Artillery Battalion, and less than an hour later the town was taken against light opposition, more than fifty prisoners being captured in the town. The 2nd Battalion's Company E moved into Heintrop at 1900 and, after a platoon of anti-tank guns was attached to the battalion, defenses were organized for the night in the battalion area which now included Lippborg, Heintrop and Hultrop.

In the meantime, the 3rd Battalion, on the regiment's right flank, attacked at 0600 with Company I on the right and Company K on the left, both with the mission of driving southwest. The two companies crossed the Lippe at a single crossing site about 2,000 yards east of the Autobahn. The battalion's foot elements crossed the Lippe in assault boats (vehicles later crossing over the bridge in the 1st Battalion zone). The two companies initially met only light resistance, but by 0700 severe opposition was coming from dual-purpose 20-millimeter, 40-millimeter and 88-millimeter guns located 500 yards south of Untrop. By 0930, however, Company K had advanced to within half a mile of Eilmsen and was meeting stiff resistance in the form of heavy rifle and machine gun fire. Eight hours later, at 1730, the company had forced its way into the stubbornly defended town and finally secured Eilmsen by 1830. Reorganizing immediately to push south, the company attacked to seize Dinker, which fell against comparatively light opposition. The company's next objective was Nord-Dinker, which was to be taken with the aid of attached tanks. (Company C of the 709th Tank Battalion had crossed the repaired treadway bridge shortly after 1700.) The infantrymen mounted four tanks and the edge of Nord-Dinker was reached against no resistance. Here, however, a well-concealed Tiger Tank was waiting for such an attack. Three of the American tanks passed before the Tiger fired, knocking out the fourth tank with one round. The Tiger then turned on the third American tank and it,

too, was knocked out. The lead tank, the only one of the four with wide treads, quickly turned around and withdrew to Dinker, but the second tank became stuck in attempting to turn around and was abandoned.

Company I, which encountered the bulk of the fire from the German dual-purpose guns, captured Untrop and there held up for the rest of the day, being checked in its advance by the enemy fire from south of Untrop. The reserve Company L was committed to assist Company I at 0800. The advance of Company K had created a gap between Companies I and K, and Company L advanced through this gap. The Lippe-Seiten Canal extended into the 379th Infantry's zone as far east as the Autobahn and, with the advance of Company L, some German troops fled to the west side of the highway between the canal and the river. The Germans then crossed to the south side of the Lippe-Seiten Canal, and elements of Company L swung south across the Autobahn and hit the enemy from out of the south, thus pushing the Germans back against the canal and trapping them. More than fifty prisoners were captured after the ensuing fire-fight, and the company pushed to the north to make contact with Company I at 1800. This operation successfully completed, two platoons of Company L established a roadblock at an Autobahn overpass while the other two platoons moved to Dinker, already captured by Company K, to be in position to attack Sued-Dinker the morning of April 5.

During the early part of the day, a gap existed between the 379th Infantry's left flank and the 8th Armored Division on the 95th Division's left flank. Elements of the 95th Reconnaissance Troop (Company D of the 709th Tank Battalion was attached to the reconnaissance troop at this time) crossed the treadway bridge in the 379th Infantry zone and patrolled the regiment's left flank late the afternoon of April 4. Other elements of the reconnaissance troop had made contact with elements of the 8th Armored Division in the vicinity of Herzfeld early in the afternoon.

Throughout April 5 and 6, the regiment held the forward line it had won April 4, the Hamm-Soest railroad between Welter and Borgeln, but continued clearing isolated pockets of resistance within the area, some of them strongly defended.

During hours of darkness the morning of April 5, the 2nd and 3rd Platoons of Company L, from their position in Dinker, attacked south, coming abreast of Company B in the vicinity of Kirchwelter, then turning west to strike at Sued-Dinker. This small village had been softened by repeated artillery concentrations and by an air strike of fighter bombers at 0915. Following the conclusion of the air sup-

port mission, the two platoons moved into the village against no opposition whatsoever, taking more than thirty prisoners who were assembled in a single cellar waiting for a chance to surrender. In the early afternoon, the two platoons began to attack Am Hagen, almost adjacent to Sued-Dinker on the south, and were met by heavy small arms, machine gun and tank fire from an underpass on the Hamm-Soest railroad a mile south of Sued-Dinker. The fire was so intense that the two platoons were forced to withdraw into Sued-Dinker. Here the company held up for the night, after being re-joined by the 1st Platoon and the Weapons Platoon, both of which had been relieved of guarding the Autobahn overpass.

In the meantime, two platoons of Company I were located in the village of Korte, a mile southeast of Sued-Dinker and just north of the Hamm-Soest railroad. Shortly afternoon, the Germans counter-attacked the village and its general vicinity with one of the strongest counterattacking forces met by the Division throughout its Ruhr Pocket operation. An estimated company of enemy infantry, supported by eight tanks, three half-tracked vehicles and one armored truck mounting an anti-aircraft gun, roared through a railroad underpass immediately south of Korte and pushed into the village, building a tremendous volume of fire as the advance progressed. The German force leveled every building in Korte but one, then withdrew from the village to the west and fired on Sued-Dinker, then returned to Korte and pushed half a mile north of the town where tanks of the regiment's attached Company C 709th Tank Battalion halted the enemy's advance. The Germans withdrew south of the Hamm-Soest railroad in the direction of Illingen. The strength of the German attack easily forced the two platoons of Company I to give ground, although the platoons placed bazooka and mortar fire on the enemy, but with little effect. Three hours after the counterattack had begun, Company I was back in Korte, the Germans making no further effort to retake the town. The rest of Company I, meanwhile was attacking Nord-Dinker from the north, clearing the town against light resistance by 1630. Company K, from its position in Dinker, advanced northwest to clear isolated pockets of resistance, encountered little resistance throughout the day and established contact with the 378th Infantry at a road junction on the Autobahn just west of Nord-Dinker. At 0730 the regiment's 2nd Battalion became Division reserve, but held its position in the vicinity of Lippborg.

Throughout April 6, the regiment continued to clear remaining resistance in the area which had been secured by the drive April 4. Only offensive action was by the 3rd Battalion's Company L which attacked at 0800 to capture Am Hagen. With a section of tanks and

tank destroyers and one machine gun platoon of Company M attached, expecting heavy resistance. But the Germans had withdrawn. However, the company received intermittent artillery fire from the woods across the railroad. Accordingly, the company was directed to clear the woods and secure the adjacent Autobahn cloverleaf. The woods were cleared against little resistance, and the company advanced to the cloverleaf where seventeen Germans guarding a roadblock were surprised and captured. The cloverleaf was secured and voice contact was made with the 3rd Battalion 378th Infantry, north of the Autobahn.

Combat patrols were active throughout the day and made deep penetrations as well as capturing a few prisoners. One 1st Battalion patrol from Company A crossed the railroad and advanced south to the edge of Klotingen where it was held up by machine gun fire from an estimated thirty well dug-in positions around the town. The patrol withdrew with casualties of one killed and one wounded, but had captured two prisoners from whom it was learned that the town was defended by a reported 200 Germans. A heavy artillery concentration was placed on the town as the patrol withdrew. The 379th Infantry's 2nd Battalion, in Division reserve, was attached to the 377th Infantry at 1700 to support that regiment's attack on Soest, but the battalion was not committed and was returned to 379th Infantry control at 2120.

The regiment returned to the offensive the morning of April 7 with the 1st and 3rd Battalions attacking southwest, the objective being a main highway between Rhynern on the north to Hilbeck in the center to the vicinity of Werl on the south. The 3rd Battalion was to continue on the right flank, the 1st Battalion on the left and the 2nd Battalion was to remain in regimental reserve, although it was given the mission of protecting the regiment's left flank. As will be seen, however, one company of the 2nd Battalion was committed late in the day.

The right flank 3rd Battalion attacked with all three rifle companies abreast, Company L on the right, Company K in the center and Company I on the left. Company L pushed southwest from the Autobahn cloverleaf that it had secured a day earlier. Attacking at 0730 "under fog as good as a smoke screen", the company commander placed machine guns on the Autobahn (which was the company's right boundary) to cover the advance and called for artillery concentrations on all woods and farmhouses prior to attacking such objectives. With one exception, the attack was uneventful as the artillery-infantry teamwork combined to make for rapid progress. The 2nd Platoon, which was on the company's left flank, and elements

of Company K were trapped in a farmhouse near Unter-Allen by enemy tanks which circled the house, firing into it. A hurry-up call for artillery drove the tanks away and no casualties were suffered by Americans. The company reached its objective, the right portion the Rhynern-Werl highway, by 1800, contacted the 378th Infantry on the right at the junction of the Autobahn and the highway just south of Rhynern and set up defensive positions for the night.

Company K proceeded through the center of the battalion sector with little difficulty, the company's zone being largely a farming area. The company cleared Nord-Allen late in the afternoon, then advanced on to its portion of the regimental objective, the Rhynern-Werl highway. The strongest resistance met by the battalion during the day was on the left of the zone where Company I found stubborn resistance in Illingen. After three hours of fighting, the town was cleared and the company advanced to Wambeln, thence to and beyond Unter-Allen, both of these latter towns being taken with comparative ease.

Until late in the day, the 1st Battalion's advance was rapid as the battalion attacked with Company A on the right, Company C on the left and the initially reserve Company B committed at 0900. At 0530 Company A attacked from the woods south of Recklingsen, crossed the Hamm-Soest railroad and advanced on Klotingen with a section of tanks and one of tank destroyers. The tanks and tank destroyers became mired in the woods and the company advanced without them. Klotingen fell with no opposition as the company walked through the town. Civilians reported that German forces had withdrawn at 0300 the same day. The tanks and tank destroyers rejoined the company at this point and the attack was continued with the 1st Platoon leading, two squads of the platoon mounted on tanks. Flerke was also taken against no resistance, only one prisoner being taken in the town, he being a German courier riding a motorcycle who rode up to the column before recognizing it as American. Shortly after 0900 the attack was continued in the same formation, and as the company left the western edge of Flerke enemy small arms and machine gun fire came in from the left flank. The company placed the fire of every weapon on the enemy, who quickly withdrew. The company turned northwest and attacked Scheidingen, which was taken against negligible resistance. The town was secured by 1000. At 1400 the company attacked again, this time to the southwest parallel to the railroad which marked the battalion's right flank. The advance was extremely rapid as the company cleared woods and farm houses. Initially, the company's objective for the day was a woods a mile northeast of Hilbeck, but as the company reached the edge of the

woods it was directed to change the direction of its attack to the south to secure Proebsting, a mile east of Hilbeck. Proebsting was taken against light resistance by 1530 and the company remained in the town for the night.

Company C's advance was also rapid and was also made against little opposition. The company overran Einecke, then advanced southwest to capture Ehnigsen at 1000. At 1115 a change in boundary gave part of the southern section of the 1st Battalion zone to the 377th Infantry Regiment, now advancing on the 379th Infantry's left flank. Accordingly, Company C was directed to move to Flerke. Company C attacked again at 1330 to seize Soemmern, initially encountering stiff resistance south of Flerke but quickly overcoming this opposition, moving on to seize Soemmern by 1530.

At 0900 Company B was directed to seize Kreggenfeld, which was taken without opposition, and was then ordered to take Meyerich, a mile southwest, and this, too, was captured without opposition before noon.

The regimental reserve 2nd Battalion, meanwhile, had begun movement from an assembly area in the vicinity of Oestinghausen at 0545, closing into a new assembly area at Kirchwelter at 0915. At 1300 the battalion was directed to move to the Meyerich vicinity and this move was completed at 1430. At 1620 Colonel Bacon was directed to use his 2nd Battalion to take the northern portion of Werl (the southern part of the town being in the 8th Armored Division zone), thus pinching out the advance of the 377th Infantry Regiment and making it possible to commit that regiment elsewhere. At the same time, General Twaddle directed that the 379th Infantry would take over the 377th Infantry's zone after that regiment had cleared the hamlets of Hs. Lohe and Werler Voehde. Finally, Colonel Bacon was directed to take that part of Werl in the 95th Division zone before the end of April 7. Company G of the reserve battalion was given the Werl mission, was alerted at 1645 and immediately moved into position for the attack which began at 1845. Two hours later, Company G held about half of the Division's section of Werl, having met fairly stiff resistance. A large Luftwaffe air-field and a huge German political prison were captured during the advance in Werl.

A facet of total war hitherto unrevealed to the men of the Victory Division was encountered with the capture of the German political prison. Darkness had not yet closed in on Werl when Company G had completed clearing resistance in about half of the 95th Division's northern section of the town. A command post was set up, outposts were established against the possibility of a counterattack and Company G troops had settled down for the night before the political

prison episode occurred. First Lieutenant William F. Eberle, company executive officer, had selected for the command post one of the better houses in a block immediately adjoining a large prison. The prison was shown on the tactical map the company had used in its attack, it appeared to be vacant. However, Captain Alfred P. Ricci decided that the huge building should be investigated before the company's personnel turned in for the night.

Following a high brick wall, troops from the 3rd Platoon and company headquarters searched for an entrance to the enclosure and finally located a large barn-like door. No sound came from within. Cautiously, the Company G men pushed against the door, and it creaked back easily. Ricci, Eberle and the men entered, rifles at the ready. The place appeared deserted. Then, over to the left, a door opened and a motley crew of civilians stumbled out and advanced, hesitantly, toward the infantrymen. They didn't speak, at first, and they looked like they wanted to run. Then other doors opened and more people made their way into the half light of the yard. Some were women. Then something seemed to snap and they rushed pell-mell from the doorways in every direction. "English? English? English?" they cried in pitiful voices.

One of the Company G men shouted "No, we're Americans!" and this announcement was followed by a tremendous uproar; some of the released prisoners pumped each other's hands and kissed each other, and some just stood and wept. Order was restored as soon as possible and it was found that the prison house had more than a thousand civilians. But out of the uproar had come stray wisps of information in broken English phrases. The prisoners were Russian, Polish, French and German. Their crime: they had differed with the Fuehrer. Meanwhile, a group of Company G men had begun a systematic search of the prison and soon more than a hundred Nazi jailers were ushered out of a side door, resplendent in gaudy uniforms and shiny leather boots.

When the now liberated mob saw their guards, there was no holding them. All the pent-up hate and misery and suffering of months of confinement and ill-treatment burst out in a frenzy of cursing and kicking and scratching. They tore into the fear-struck guards with fists and fingernails.

"We felt like cheering," Captain Ricci said later, "but our job was to maintain order and this we finally did after firing a few shots into the air."

Like the earlier described operations of the 378th Infantry Regiment in and around Hamm, those operations of the 379th Infantry which came after 1200 April 7 occurred as a component of Task Force

Twaddle, which is discussed later in this narrative. Since relieving elements of the 83rd Infantry Division along the north bank of the Lippe River April 3, the 379th Infantry had advanced generally nine miles southwest into the Ruhr Pocket, against widely varying resistance. Generally, however, as in the 378th Infantry's zone, the 379th Infantry found the enemy willing—often anxious—to surrender. And, as in the 378th Infantry's zone it appeared that the German plan of defense was uncoordinated and too loosely organized to repel the 95th Division's advance. As will be seen in the next sections of the Ruhr Pocket discussion, this became more and more the case as the Division continued the attack.

THE 377th INFANTRY IN THE RUHR POCKET

April 3 through 7

The operations of the 378th and 379th Infantry Regiments in the Ruhr Pocket from April 3 through April 7 have already been described. The story of the 377th Infantry Regiment's commitment to seize Soest completes the 95th Division's operations for this period. Field Order No. 6, published April 3 and previously discussed, directed the 377th Infantry to move to an assembly area in the vicinity of Beckum April 4 and to be prepared to attack on Division order, passing through elements of the 379th Infantry, to clear the western portion of the Division zone to the Ruhr River or to seize Soest and clear the eastern portion of the Division zone to the Moehne River. This latter mission was assigned to the regiment April 5 as the Division's main effort and was executed with considerable success, clearly taking the Germans by surprise.

The 377th Infantry, after being relieved of assignment to the 2nd Armored Division and reverting to 95th Division control April 2, remained in an assembly area in the vicinity of Langenberg until the morning of April 4 when the regiment moved to a new assembly area near Beckum. On the afternoon of April 4 the XIX Corps published its Letter of Instructions No. 136 which directed that the 95th Division "attack south, making the main effort on the left to secure and mop up Soest."

To effect the Corps directives, the 95th Division published its Operations Instructions No. 31 April 5. These instructions pointed out that the Division would continue to attack in zone, making its main effort on the left (east) to capture Soest, then change the direction of its attack to the west to clear its zone of all enemy as far west as the Corps limit of advance.¹ The 8th Armored Division would continue

¹Operations Instructions No. 31 listed 95th Division attachments as the 547th A.A.A. Battalion, the 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 709th Tank Battalion, the 15th Cavalry Group, the 351st Field Artillery Battalion, the 70th Field Artillery Battalion, the 92nd Chemical Mortar Battalion (less Company C) and the 119th Field Artillery Group. The 1115th Engineer Group was in support of the Division.

its attack on the left of the 95th Division to clear its zone of all enemy as far west as the Corps limit of advance.

The 377th Infantry Regiment was directed to attack April 5 to make the Division's main effort, seizing and mopping up the city of Soest. Then, the regiment was to continue its attack with no more than two infantry battalions and clear its zone of all enemy. The remaining battalion was to assemble in a designated area as Division reserve. The 378th and 379th Infantry Regiments were directed to continue their attacks in zone, thus effecting no change in the operations of these two regiments. The 95th Division Artillery was directed to support the Division's attack and to place the mass of its fires in support of the 377th Infantry.

Attached to the 377th Infantry for its attack on Soest were Company A of the 709th Tank Battalion and Company A 320th Medical Battalion; and the 920th Field Artillery Battalion, the 92nd Field Artillery Battalion, the 92nd Chemical Mortar Battalion (less Company C), Company A 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion and Company A 320th Engineer Battalion were placed in support of the regiment's attack. At 2215 April 4 the Division commander directed Colonel Gaillard to move his regiment to a concentration area northeast of Lippborg the morning of April 5 and this movement was accomplished by 1400 of April 5. At 1415 the 1st Battalion crossed the Lippe River at Lippborg, passing through elements of the 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry in the vicinity of Hultrop, and the attack was under way.

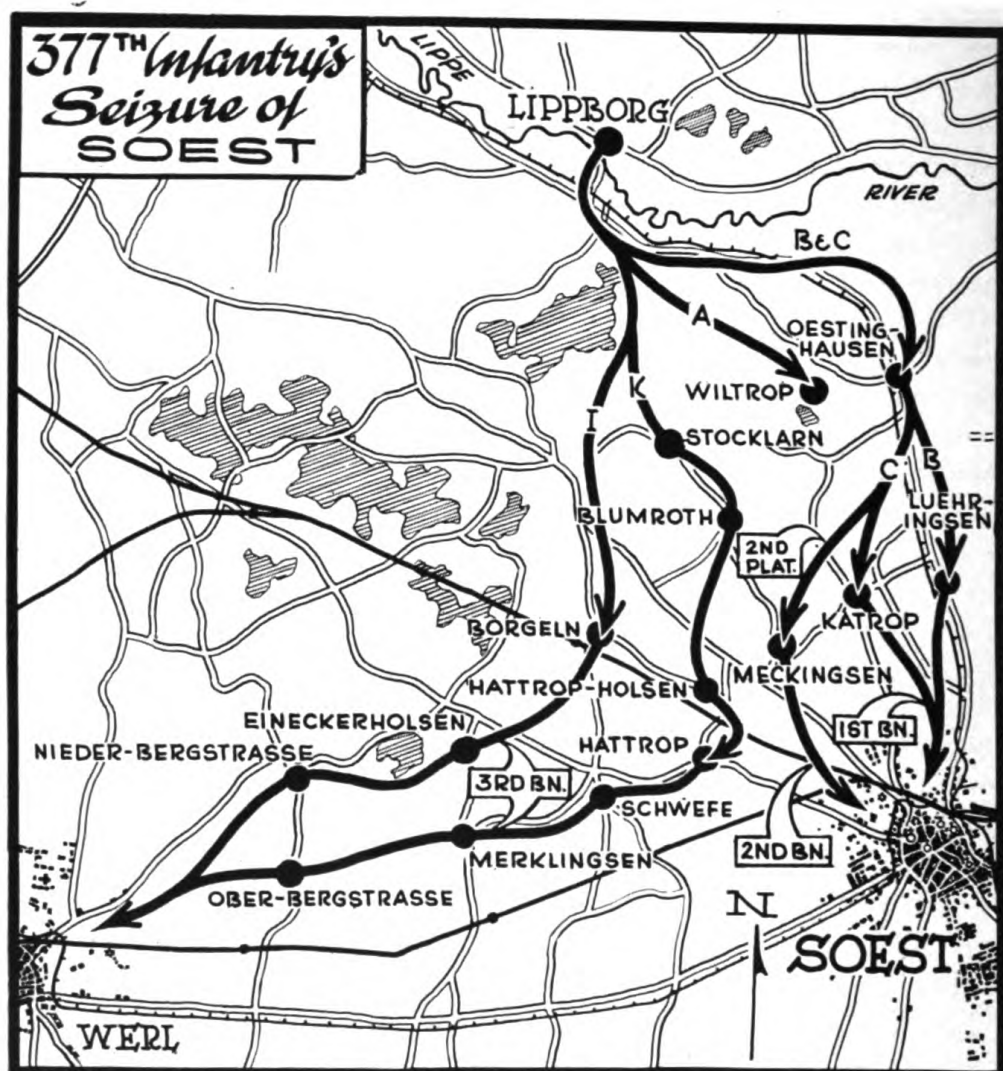
Company A attacked on the right, Companies B and C on the left with Company B in the lead. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph F. Decker, battalion commander, directed his companies not to follow roads in attacking. "The Germans knew that this was the way Americans generally attacked," Lieutenant Decker later said, "so we were usually able to take the enemy by surprise by coming in on the flanks." The battalion advanced swiftly against light resistance, Company A advancing southeast to seize Wiltrop and Companies B and C attacking east and then south to take Oestinghausen. Both towns were cleared by 1800 and defensive positions were organized as the battalion held up for the night. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, meanwhile, remained in the vicinity of Lippborg prepared to attack the morning of April 6.

General Twaddle had directed that top air priority be given to Soest and, accordingly, fighter bombers hit the town at 1050 April 5 with sixteen 500-pound bombs, thus softening the city somewhat prior to the assault by the 377th Infantry the following day.

The regiment's attack on Soest was continued at 0830 April 6 with the 1st Battalion on the left and the 3rd Battalion on the right. The

advance was extremely rapid. By mid-morning the 1st Battalion had pushed forward to an east-west line anchored on Luehringsen on the east, Katrop in the center and Meckingsen on the west, all three towns being secured against negligible resistance. At this point, which was less than two miles from the regimental objective (Soest), the battalion held its advance until 1700 when the attack on Soest was resumed. Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion advanced with equal speed on the right of the 1st Battalion. Company K secured Stocklarn by 1000, continued southeast and captured Blumroth an hour later. Company I captured Borgeln by 1330 and four hours later Company K had pushed south to seize Hattrop-Holsen and Hattrop. All towns in the 3rd Battalion zone fell against comparatively light opposition. Although it was planned initially for the final attack on Soest to begin early the morning of April 7, General Twaddle (who spent most of April 6 at the 377th Infantry Regiment's command post) decided to press his advantage and directed Colonel Gaillard to attack to seize the city at 1700. The reserve 2nd Battalion, which had moved to Meckingsen earlier in the day, was committed on the right of the 1st Battalion and the attack was launched. Much as they had done throughout the day, the Germans showed little inclination to fight and seemed to be most anxious to surrender. Partly responsible for this were the tremendous artillery concentrations which were poured into the city prior to the attack and, too, the city had been struck by fighter bombers April 4 and 5. Neither attacking battalion met appreciable resistance in driving into Soest. Half the city had been secured by midnight and patrols had probed all of Soest.

The foregoing discussion of the 377th Infantry's operations April 6 to seize Soest has been brief, largely because the regiment advanced almost at will against a highly disorganized enemy. But a more complete story of this day's operations can better be told from the perspective of one of its attacking companies, for the advance of Company C not only spans the entire operation but more clearly points to the Germans' disorganization and disintegration. The company attacked at 0830 with two platoons abreast, advancing as far south as Katrop without incident. Here the enemy was met in force—but not fighting. The Germans had formed into columns and were waiting to surrender to the first Americans to arrive in the town. Three officers and eighty-two enlisted men, fourteen 105-millimeter guns, a battery of 20-millimeter flak guns and a large store of ammunition were captured by Company C in Katrop without firing a shot. One of the company's scouts went into a small wooded area west of Katrop and found two more willing prisoners and, before he had returned to



Katrop with these two Germans, 200 more Nazi troops came out of the woods and surrendered to the single American soldier.

The 2nd Platoon then moved out of Katrop to capture the town of Meckingsen, a mile to the southwest, crossing an open field between Katrop and Meckingsen with marching fire. Brief small arms and machine gun fire killed one man (the company's only casualty for the day), but the effective marching fire quickly pinned down the Germans in Meckingsen and the town was entered against no further resistance. Twenty more Germans were captured in Meckingsen and, upon being relieved by elements of the 2nd Battalion shortly after 1400, the platoon rejoined Company C in Katrop.

Before the 2nd Battalion moved into Meckingsen, however, the Buergermeister of the town told Captain Penrod Thornton, Company

C commander, that German troops in Soest were willing to surrender. Not being authorized to negotiate the surrender, the Buergermeister said he would contact a German major who was on the northern outskirts of the city. The major was found but stated that he was not empowered to surrender the Soest garrison. However, he agreed to negotiate with the commander of the garrison. It was determined that if the German troops would agree to lay down their guns, two flak bursts would be fired into the air at 1600 and the major was to return to Katrop to escort 377th Infantry troops into the city. Every indication pointed to the fact that the city was going to surrender following the major's entrance into Soest. German troops were seen to withdraw from roadblocks on the northern approaches to the city and white flags appeared on many buildings. At 1600 the two flak bursts were fired, the signal to indicate the city's surrender, but the major did not return to Katrop. After waiting thirty minutes and in view of the fact that the Germans had not fully complied with the agreed surrender terms, artillery was once again placed on the city and, as previously stated, the attack began at 1700.

Company C attacked at 1720 and entered the city without firing a shot just prior to darkness. The Buergermeister of Meckingsen had told Thornton that many of the Soest defenders were in bunkers and, accordingly, civilians were ordered to lead elements of the company (and the battalion) to these bunkers where almost 400 Germans surrendered without a fight.

An interesting sidelight of the operation occurred at 1845 when a message was received from the XIX Corps stating that a radio report had been received by the Twelfth Army Group from a prisoner-of-war camp in Soest the night of April 5. The message stated that the prisoner-of-war camp was located on the southwestern edge of Soest and contained approximately 5,000 French army officers. The purpose of the message was to request that no American artillery fire be placed on this camp, a few casualties having been inflicted by American artillery April 5. How the prisoners had obtained and secretly operated a radio under supposedly strict German surveillance was not known, but the indicated area was not hit again.

The 2nd Battalion 379th Infantry Regiment had been attached to the 377th Infantry at 1700 April 6 to assist in the reduction of the city should stiff opposition be encountered, but the battalion was not committed in the Soest operation and reverted to 379th Infantry control at 2120 the same day.

Beginning at daybreak April 7, the 1st and 2nd Battalions completed clearing Soest, meeting no resistance and capturing many prisoners. The town was secured within three hours and the reported



Above: A patrol of the 377th Infantry Regiment works its way through a shattered Soest street the city's capture.

Below: French officers, imprisoned by the Germans at Soest for four years, parade before General Twaddle and their commanding officer the day after their liberation by the 95th Division.





A group of German prisoners march out of their barracks in Soest guarded by tanks.

prisoner-of-war camp, which was overrun by the 2nd Battalion, was found to contain 4,500 French army officers and 600 enlisted men. Directed to remain temporarily in their camp, the liberated and now joyous Frenchmen were provided with food from the Division's emergency rations. Many of the prisoners had been in the camp since the fall of France and most of them were in relatively good condition.

Once captured by the 377th Infantry, Soest was to be occupied by elements of the 8th Armored Division and, accordingly, the 1st and 2nd Battalions 377th Infantry began movement to assembly areas in the early afternoon, the 1st Battalion closing into the vicinity of Hattrop at 1530 and the 2nd Battalion closing into the Eineckerholsen area at 1600.

To the 377th Infantry's 3rd Battalion was given the mission of turning west and clearing the remainder of the regimental zone. The regiment's zone, incidentally, was increased somewhat on the north early the morning of April 7 as the unit on the regiment's right flank, the 379th Infantry, was becoming somewhat extended at the time. The battalion attacked toward Werl from its positions along a line Borgeln-Hattrop at 0530, and its advance was extremely rapid. The towns of Eineckerholsen, Merkingen, Schwefe, Ober-Bergstrasse and Nieder-Bergstrasse were all cleared before noon. The only appreciable resistance met throughout the drive was at Nieder-Bergstrasse where two German tanks held out temporarily, but these soon fled and almost 400 prisoners were taken in the town, including many German medical and veterinary corps officers. The battalion continued its advance to the northeastern edge of Werl where the regimental zone was pinched out by elements of the 8th Armored Division on the left and the 379th Infantry on the right and front.

Thus, with separate discussions of the operations of the 377th, 378th and 379th Infantry Regiments in the Ruhr Pocket from April 3 through April 7, the first phase of the 95th Division's Ruhr Pocket reduction has been completed. The second phase, the operations of Task Force Twaddle, is to be discussed in two parts: The drive westward to Dortmund and then south to the Ruhr River, and the operations of Task Force Faith.



The Germans used a wagon and debris to flank this fort as a road block to bar entry to Soest.

TASK FORCE TWADDLE

April 7-13

The operations of the 95th Infantry Division in the Ruhr Pocket from April 7 through April 13 came as a component of Task Force Twaddle. This huge force, which was composed of approximately 35,000 troops and was tantamount to a corps, was organized by the XIX Corps at 1200 April 7. As explained early in this chapter, the XIX Corps was fighting at this time in two directions at once, being split between an armored-infantry sweep to the heart of the Reich, Berlin, to the east, and the seizure of a large portion of the Ruhr Pocket to the south and southwest. Because of the Corps' rapid advance to the east, the distance between the two operations was considerable by April 7, and it was not feasible for the Corps to control closely both operations. Accordingly, Task Force Twaddle was organized and the Ruhr Pocket mission was assigned to it. The XIX Corps' Letter of Instructions No. 139 directed the formation of Task Force Twaddle and attached to the 95th Division (for operations only) the 8th Armored Division and its attachments (which included the 17th Airborne Division's 194th Glider Infantry Regiment), the 1254th Engineer Battalion, the 258th Field Artillery Group and 748th Field Artillery Battalion.¹ As indicated by its designation, the task force was commanded by General Twaddle.

South of the Task Force Twaddle zone was the First U. S. Army's III Corps, which was attacking from the southeast with the mission of clearing the enemy from the Ruhr Pocket as far north as the Ruhr River. Fifteen miles in front (west) of Task Force Twaddle's front line was the Ninth Army's XVI Corps, whose 75th Infantry Division

¹A further guide to the size of Task Force Twaddle is seen in the attachments to the two divisions of the task force. At this time, the 95th Division's attachments included the 709th Tank Battalion, the 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 547th A.A.A. Battalion, the 15th Cavalry Group, the 70th Field Artillery Battalion, the 351st Field Artillery Battalion and the 92nd Chemical Mortar Battalion (less Company C). Attachments to the 8th Armored Division included the 809th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 473rd A.A.A. Battalion, the 10th Armored Group, the 3454th and 3658th Quartermaster Truck Companies, the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, the 959th Field Artillery Battalion, the 275th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and Company C of the 92nd Chemical Mortar Battalion. The Corps letter of instructions relieved the 119th Field Artillery Group of attachment to the 95th Division.

was attacking from the north at right angles to the Task Force Twaddle drive to clear the pocket as far south as the Ruhr River.

Five missions were assigned to Task Force Twaddle:

1. Clear the enemy from the Corps zone west of Geseke to a line anchored on Hamm on the north, Westhilbeck in the center and Wickede on the south. (This line was the Corps limit of advance.)
2. Improve the position in the vicinity of Hamm as the situation warrants, and when the area between the Moehne and Ruhr rivers has been cleared, attack west to connect firmly with the XVI Corps. (As will be seen, this was changed April 8 and Task Force Twaddle continued its attack west simultaneously with the clearing of the region between the Moehne and Ruhr rivers.)
3. Continue the attack in conjunction with the XVI Corps to reduce the Ruhr Pocket.
4. Gain and maintain contact with the III Corps (on the left) when that Corps reaches a common boundary (the Ruhr river).
5. Protect Task Force Twaddle's left (south) flank from the Dortmund-Ems Canal in the west to the town of Ruethen in the east.

The Ruhr and Moehne rivers join at the town of Neheim. East of this town and between these two rivers is a semi-mountainous, heavily forested area which lay in the southeast corner of the Task Force Twaddle zone. To clear this area, General Twaddle organized Task Force Faith, commanded by Brigadier General Don C. Faith, assistant Division commander. Task Force Faith was composed of the 377th Infantry Regiment, the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, the 920th Field Artillery Battalion and its attached Company A of the 92nd Chemical Mortar Battalion and smaller units to be listed later. Task Force Faith became operational at 2130 April 7, but it will not be further discussed in this section of the Ruhr Pocket chapter. The operations of Task Force Faith are treated in the fifth and final section of the chapter, for, although a component of Task Force Twaddle, the operations of Task Force Faith were distinctly separate from those of the larger task force.

Task Force Twaddle's Field Order No. 1, issued April 7, directed the 8th Armored Division to continue attacking west in zone to a north-south line from the vicinity of Budberg on the north to Wickede on the south. In addition, the 8th Armored Division was to maintain contact with Task Force Faith (south of the armored division), as well as to protect Task Force Twaddle's left flank when the 8th

Armored Division's advance cleared the forward elements of Task Force Faith. However, as the primary concern here is the history of the 95th Division's Ruhr Pocket commitment, a detailed study of the armored unit's advance has not been undertaken. Although a major unit in Task Force Twaddle, the operations of the 8th Armored Division continued to be much the same as they might have been had Task Force Twaddle not been organized.

The 378th and 379th Infantry Regiments were directed to continue the attack to the Corps limit of advance. Actually, the two regiments had almost reached this limit of advance when Task Force Twaddle was organized, for the Corps limit of advance was a line running generally from Nord Herringen on the north to Wickedede on the south. All other units of Task Force Twaddle were assigned normal missions. At the outset, then, the dispositions of the task force's major units had Task Force Faith on the left or southern flank, the 8th Armored Division north of Task Force Faith, the 379th Infantry north of the armored unit and the 378th Infantry on the right. (Actually, the 15th Cavalry Group was north of the 378th Infantry, reconnoitering the north bank of the Lippe River in the task force zone and thus was the task force's right unit.)

At this time, it was estimated that the Germans had approximately 60,000 "combat effectives" in the Ruhr Pocket (an estimate which later was found to be extremely conservative). Besides remnants of twenty-four enemy divisions, a host of miscellaneous units were being identified daily. Certain German units were known to be in the vicinity of Task Force Twaddle's advance, including the 116th Panzer Division, directly in front of the 95th Division; the 2nd Paratroop Division, in contact on the XVI Corps front; and the 338th Infantry Division, located to the south on the III Corps front. Also, it was believed that the 2nd Paratroop Division was in process of movement into the Task Force Twaddle zone by virtue of statements by prisoners and the identification of the 2nd Paratroop Regiment by the 8th Armored Division the morning of April 7.

"Opposing the advance of Task Force Twaddle to the west, the enemy is extremely confused and disorganized," stated an intelligence summary published April 7 by the Division G-2 Section. "The only important tactical units in contact appear to be remnants of the 116th Panzer Division which have opposed the advance of the 8th Armored Division and the 95th Division during the last three days, together with elements of the 2nd Paratroop Division identified today. Many bottom-of-the-barrel units must naturally be expected. Although there will be large numbers of (enemy) troops in the area, there does not appear to be any organized plan of resistance. Resistance will

occur, undoubtedly, in isolated pockets, especially in the key communication centers of Unna and Kamen."

With Task Force Faith being discussed separately, the concern here is the advance of the 378th and 379th Infantry Regiments upon the city of Dortmund to the southwest and the subsequent clearing of the remainder of the Division zone south of Dortmund to the Ruhr River. Because the advance of the 378th and 379th Infantry Regiments was continuous throughout April 7 and was not directly affected by the formation of Task Force Twaddle at noon of that day, a small part of the operations of these two regiments under Task Force Twaddle was discussed in the first two sections of this chapter. At the end of April 7, the 378th Infantry held a line running from Nord Herringen on the north to a point a few hundred yards west of Rhynern on the south, and the 379th Infantry held a line running from this point south to Werl. For clarity and continuity, the discussion of the Task Force Twaddle operation has been divided into three separate narratives: The operations of the 378th Infantry, the advance of the 379th Infantry and a brief summary of the 8th Armored Division attack.

THE 378th INFANTRY IN TASK FORCE TWADDLE

To review briefly the 378th Infantry's operations in the Ruhr Pocket prior to the formation of Task Force Twaddle, the regiment had relieved elements of the 83rd Infantry Division April 3 in a narrow bridgehead over the Lippe River and the Lippe-Seiten Canal at Hamm. Also, the regiment relieved elements of the 83rd Division along the north bank of the Lippe River east of Hamm. By the end of April 7, the regiment had captured the vital German rail center of Hamm and, from east of Hamm, had seized a bridgehead over the Lippe River and Canal, then pushed south and southwest to encircle Hamm from the rear. As the discussion of the regiment's Task Force Twaddle operations begins, the 378th Infantry held a line from Nord Herringen on the north to a point just west of Rhynern on the south. As pointed out earlier, the regiment's first mission was to attack west to the Corps limit of advance, but by the morning of April 8 the regiment's 1st and 2nd Battalions had already reached the Corps limit, and the 3rd Battalion had only to advance a few hundred yards west before it, too, would reach the Corps limit. The 3rd Battalion, which was attacking on the regiment's left flank, had not reached the Corps limit of advance abreast of the 1st and 2nd Battalions the afternoon of April 7 because of stiff resistance which had been met in and around Rhynern before the town was captured the afternoon of April 7. Accordingly, the battalion attacked at 0530 April 8 with Company L on the right and Company K on the left. An hour later and against little opposition the attacking companies had come abreast of the 1st and 2nd Battalions on the Corps boundary (or, limit of advance). This boundary marked the regiment's first objective and, according to the directives of Task Force Twaddle's Field Order No. 1, the regiment was to hold up on this line until Task Force Faith had cleared the area between the Moehne and Ruhr rivers. However, late the afternoon of April 8 it was determined that Task Force Twaddle would continue with its second mission simultaneously with

the reduction of the pocket formed by the Moehne and Ruhr rivers. (The 379th Infantry and the 8th Armored Division also reached the Corps limit of advance April 8). Thus, together with the 379th Infantry on the left, the 378th Infantry prepared to attack southwest the morning of April 9 to connect with the XVI Corps, which was then about fifteen miles to the west. Task Force Twaddle's Operations Instructions No. 1, issued late the afternoon of April 8, outlined the change described above. Late the morning of April 8 the 378th Infantry's 2nd Battalion (which was then in the center of the regimental zone) expanded in width to take in the zone of the 3rd Battalion on the left, and the 3rd Battalion assembled in the vicinity of Berge as regimental reserve.

(Although not directly concerned with the operations of the 378th Infantry Regiment, it should be noted here that all elements of Task Force Twaddle were relieved of attachment to the XIX Corps and were attached to the XVI Corps at 0600 April 9. The commanding general of the XVI Corps directed General Twaddle to continue with his previously assigned mission.)

The 378th Infantry's 1st and 2nd Battalions renewed the attack to the southwest at 0545 April 9, with the 1st Battalion on the right and the 2nd Battalion on the left. The 1st Battalion attacked with all three rifle companies. Company A advanced on the right of the battalion zone and parallel with the Lippe River, Company B attacked in the center and Company C on the left. The advance of all three companies was generally rapid, although appreciable resistance was met in two places.

After advancing about half a mile southwest of Nord Herringen, Company A encountered heavy machine gun, automatic weapon and small arms fire from a small group of farm buildings which temporarily checked the company's advance. Company B, however, coming up on Company A's left flank, brought enough additional fire power to bear on the German defenders to wipe out the small pocket of resistance, and the two companies continued their advance without further incident until, shortly before noon, they held positions just south of Werne. The companies checked their advance at this point and probed the area to their front with patrols until dark.

Company C, meanwhile had attacked south from positions in the vicinity of Herringen. The town of Pelkum was the company's first objective. As elements of the company approached the northern outskirts of Pelkum, a heavily mined roadblock was encountered. A section of tank destroyers which was attached to the company fired on the roadblock, exploding the mines and loosening the rails enough that they could be removed by hand. A prisoner captured earlier



stated that Pelkum was defended by approximately seventy-five SS troops and, on this basis, Captain Joseph J. Ruggiere, company commander, called for an artillery concentration to soften the town. Following the artillery preparation, troops moved into Pelkum cautiously, but were surprised to encounter no opposition and no SS men. Only twelve prisoners were captured in the town, which was secured by 0800. The company immediately continued its advance along a highway coming out of the western edge of Pelkum. By noon the company had advanced as far west as the Werne-Kamen highway and was abreast of Companies A and B, having met no further enemy opposition.

"We were approaching the left flank of the 75th Division, which was then attacking to the south," Colonel Metcalfe said later. "We had to move cautiously until physical contact was made (with this division) in order to prevent mistaken identification and thus start a fight with friendly troops."

The 2nd Battalion, attacking on the left, advanced against equally light opposition. Company E cleared its first objective, the village of Selmigerheide, shortly after 0600, and an hour later the company had pushed a mile west to seize Kirchsmel, both falling with little resistance. The company continued its advance to the southwest, meeting no further opposition, and checked its advance at the Werne-Kamen highway. Company F met no opposition in securing its first objective, Nordboegge, then pushed two miles to the southwest to take Rottum against light resistance. The company did not meet the enemy again until 1500 when, almost on its objective for the day (the Werne-Kamen highway), the company came opposite high ground which was south of the Autobahn and in the 379th Infantry's zone near Kamen. At this point, a tank destroyer and three tanks (a platoon of each had advanced with Company F) were knocked out by fire from a self-propelled German anti-tank gun on the hill. Company G, advancing at the rear of Company F, also received some fire from this hill. Although in the 379th Infantry zone, the hill was causing so much trouble to the 378th Infantry that Colonel Metcalfe requested permission to move out of his zone to take the hill. The request was granted and the hill was captured after a stiff fight. The 379th Infantry relieved the 378th Infantry at this position April 10.

The Autobahn served as a boundary between the 378th and 379th Infantry Regiments at this time, but it was the responsibility of the 379th Infantry. However, it figured in one of the best of the 378th Infantry's war anecdotes in an incident which occurred April 9. The Autobahn was a German four-lane superhighway. Not all drivers in the area were familiar with the tactical situation, often being mem-

bers of service units supporting Task Force Twaddle, and ordinarily these "strangers" could not resist a burst of speed once they turned onto the Autobahn headed southwest (for the superhighway came out of American-held territory to the northeast). The 379th Infantry had placed a guard on the Autobahn to stop friendly vehicles from passing through the front lines, but some got through anyway. Observing this, Colonel Metcalfe decided to assist the 379th Infantry's outpost and placed a machine gun on the highway which advanced as the regiment cleared the area to the southwest.

"Before night this outpost had stopped about forty friendly vehicles that came hell-bent down the road," Colonel Metcalfe said. "The drivers got on a good road and apparently couldn't resist the temptation to 'step on it'."

A truck carrying Negro signal corps troops and a Negro lieutenant roared in and was stopped.

"Do you men know where you are?" an officer of the 378th Infantry asked the Negro lieutenant.

Just at that time a few German 120-millimeter mortar rounds came in.

"Suh, I suah know now!" the Negro lieutenant replied in a hurry.

Then a Nazi machine gun opened up from long range.

The Negro lieutenant turned to his men with, "Men, at long last you are now at the front!" with emphasis on the last four words.

The truck quickly turned around and returned in the direction from which it had come, the 378th Infantry spectators had a brief chuckle, and the war went on.

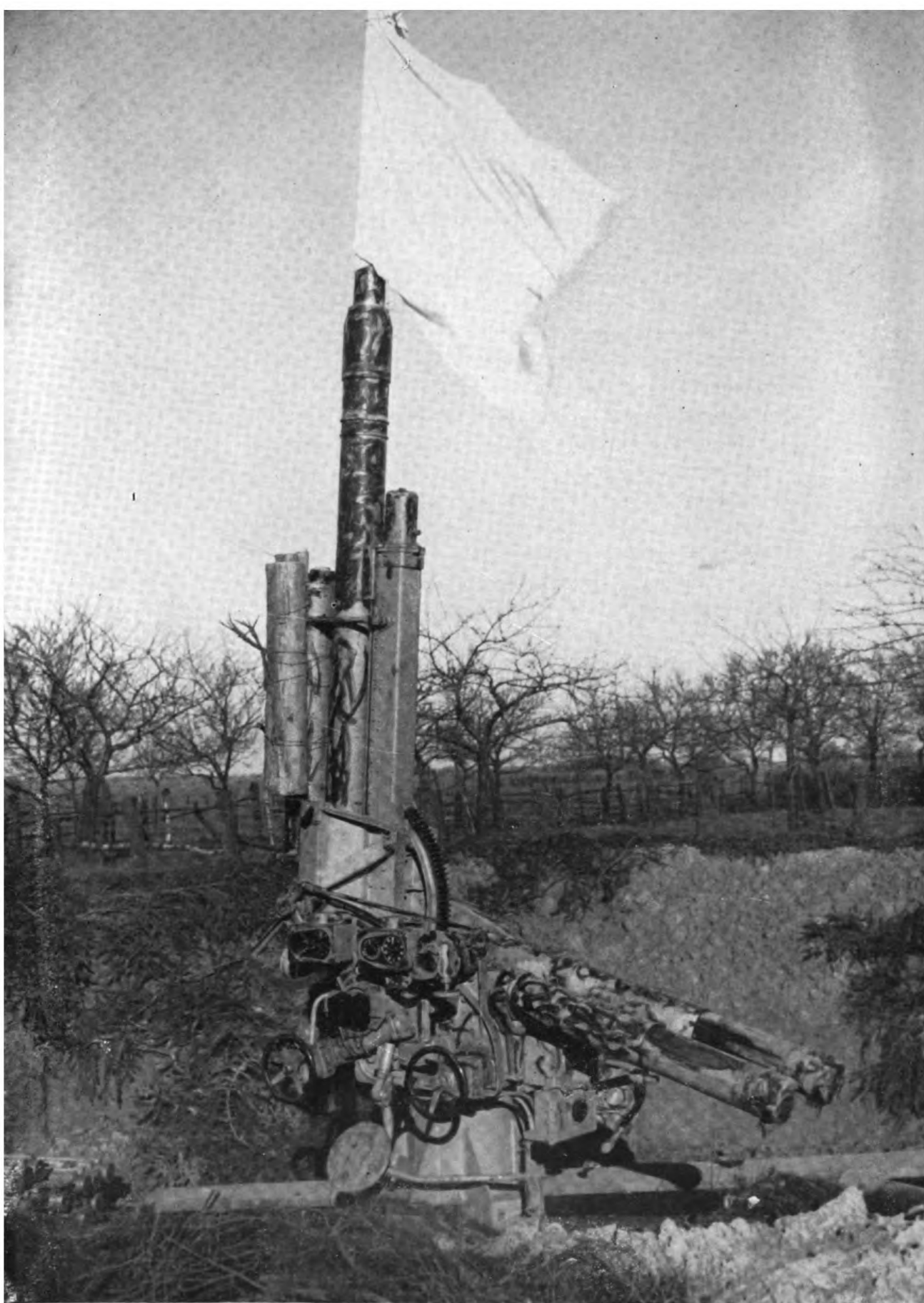
Troop A of the 15th Cavalry Group's 17th Squadron had been attached to the 378th Infantry at noon April 9. The cavalry troop moved into the regimental zone late the night of the same day and was given the mission of reconnoitering the regiment's right flank between the Lippe River and the Lippe-Seiten Canal beginning the morning of April 10.

The regiment resumed its attack at 0545 April 10, all three attacking units (the cavalry troop on the right, the 1st Battalion in the center and the 2nd Battalion on the left) progressing rapidly against an obviously disorganized, demoralized enemy whose main effort seemed to consist of trying to surrender. The cavalry troop and the 1st Battalion advanced without incident (although the cavalry encountered a minefield, but no Germans) and at 1800 Companies A, B and C crossed a railroad bridge over the Lippe-Seiten Canal to enter Luenen, which was in the northwest corner of the Division zone and had been captured earlier by elements of the 75th Infantry Division. Indicative of the crumbled German defense of the Ruhr

Pocket was the fact that the 1st Battalion had advanced almost seven miles in a few hours wholly unopposed.

The attack of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry, on the left of the regimental zone, accompanied that of the 379th Infantry south of the Autobahn (which still served as the boundary between the two regiments). As described later in this section, the 379th Infantry's advance was somewhat slow throughout the day and, accordingly, the 378th Infantry's 2nd Battalion did not advance as rapidly as did the 1st Battalion. However, by the end of the day the battalion had progressed to within a quarter of a mile of the 1st Battalion, clearing the towns of Weddinghofen, Oberaden, Niederaden and Horstmar. Although the 2nd Battalion received some machine gun and small arms fire from south of the Autobahn (particularly Company G in the vicinity of Niederaden), no appreciable resistance was met throughout the day. Troop A of the 17th Cavalry Squadron was relieved of attachment to the regiment at 2000 April 10.

The 378th Infantry Regiment continued its attack at 0830 April 11. Between April 3 and April 7, when the regiment had seized Hamm, the Germans had offered generally strong resistance and occasionally severe opposition, but with each succeeding day since the seizure of Hamm the enemy seemed less and less inclined to oppose the regiment's advance (and the same thing was noted throughout the Division and Task Force Twaddle zone). April 11 was no exception as the regiment advanced almost at will. The 1st Battalion, on the right, made contact with elements of the 75th Infantry Division half a mile west of Luenen during the night of April 10-11. At 1600, the 1st Battalion zone was pinched out by the advance of the 2nd Battalion on the left, and the 1st Battalion went into regimental reserve. The 2nd Battalion's advance was uneventful. The only town in the path of the battalion's advance was Gahmen, and this was taken by Company F by merely walking into the village. The 2nd Battalion, too, made contact with elements of the 75th Infantry Division at 1835. The 2nd Battalion advanced almost three miles before it was ordered to hold up. The heretofore reserve 3rd Battalion was committed at 1330 to move south of the Autobahn into what had been the right of the 379th Infantry zone to effect a change in regimental boundaries. The boundary change moved the 378th Infantry's left flank to the south and pointed the regiment's drive at the great German industrial city of Dortmund to the southwest. Plans for this drive will be discussed in detail a little later in this narrative. Elements of the 3rd Battalion crossed the Autobahn south of Weddinghofen and attacked to the southwest at 1400. Company L advanced almost two miles to seize Lanstrop, then continued its attack to the southeast to cap-



Surrender: A common sight as Division troops pushed through the Ruhr Pocket.

ture the village of Ostfeld. Company I attacked from Weddinghofen at the same time, initially remaining on the north side of the Autobahn and clearing the village of Kol. Horstman before crossing the Autobahn. The 3rd Battalion checked its advance at the points mentioned above.

Task Force Twaddle's Operations Instructions No. 2, issued April 11, directed (in part) the 378th Infantry Regiment to continue its attack in zone to capture the city of Dortmund. This great city was by far the largest to be given to the 95th Division as an objective. German's eleventh largest city and the second city of the Ruhr region, Dortmund's pre-war population had been 537,000. In spite of the fact that German resistance to the 378th Infantry's advance had been almost non-existent since April 7, it was not at all certain that Dortmund would fall without a fight. On the afternoon of April 11, Major Philip Z. Horton, the 378th Infantry's intelligence officer, stated that he believed many German units had withdrawn into Dortmund (thus partly accounting for the lack of resistance since April 7) and that he also believed the city would be defended. The same afternoon, Colonel Metcalfe told the Division G-3 that he would attack south the morning of April 12 in a column of battalions, then entering the town from the east and making his main effort on the left. The regiment was less than seven miles north of Dortmund as it prepared to attack the city, and much of the "softening-up" had been accomplished at intervals since the year 1940, for Dortmund (like Hamm) had been a priority target for Allied airmen since the beginning of the war.

The regiment attacked south at 0700 April 12 to seize the city of Dortmund. As expected, German resistance stiffened in proportion to the regiment's advance, and by the end of the day severe opposition was encountered in the northeastern section of the city. The attack began with the 2nd Battalion on the left, the 3rd Battalion on the right and the 1st Battalion initially in regimental reserve. During the early morning, German resistance was encountered only at a few well defended roadblocks, and by 1000 the right flank 2nd Battalion had captured Kirchderne with Company F and Hostedderbaum with Company E. This represented a considerable and rapid advance, for Kirchderne was only three miles from the heart of Dortmund. Throughout this advance, the 2nd Battalion maintained contact with the unit on its right flank, the 320th Infantry Regiment of the 35th Infantry Division (which regiment was then attached to the 75th Infantry Division). Initially, the advance of the left flank 3rd Battalion was equally rapid. Company I cleared Hostedde against little opposition and continued to the south, while Company L moved on

ture the village of Ostfeld. Company I attacked from [REDACTED]

Grevel. On the northern edge of Grevel the company surprised a group of more than a hundred Germans who were emplaced facing to the west. The amazed Germans were captured with little difficulty, after which their English-speaking captain remarked that "You Americans attacked from the unexpected direction."

By noon the two battalions had pushed to within half a mile of the northeastern outskirts of Dortmund and German resistance began to stiffen noticeably. Earlier in the day, however, the Division had been informed by the 75th Division that the XVI Corps was going to withdraw the 320th Infantry Regiment (attached to the 75th Division) and, accordingly, the 95th Division would soon be required to take over part of this area on the Division's (and the 378th Infantry's) right flank. To accomplish this, the 378th Infantry set up Task Force Sylvester (commanded by Captain George E. Sylvester, commander of Company K). The task force was composed of Company B, one platoon of the regiment's Anti-Tank Company, the regimental scouts and a service platoon. By 1500 the task force had effected relief of the 2nd Battalion (which then moved to an assembly area at Wambel), and Task Force Sylvester thus held the regiment's right flank. The regiment's remaining attacking unit, the 3rd Battalion, had worked its way well into the eastern edge of Dortmund by 1600, but German resistance, though somewhat spotty, frequently became extremely severe and the advance was slowed considerably. Then came a rapid-fire succession of events, all the results of XVI Corps directives. At 1820 the Division was notified by Corps that a boundary change would soon be effected on the Division's right flank (and this was actually accomplished by another call from Corps at 2045). Principal effect of the change was to give the Division all of metropolitan Dortmund, much of the western portion of the city having originally been in the 75th Division zone. Then, at 1850, the XVI Corps commanding general directed General Twaddle to continue the attack (of all elements of Task Force Twaddle) throughout the night of April 12-13, "and press the attack vigorously . . . continuing until the Ruhr River is reached." General Twaddle then directed that the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry (Division reserve) be made available to the 378th Infantry immediately to assist in the final reduction of Dortmund. Twenty minutes later, the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry was attached to the 378th Infantry.

Originally, Colonel Metcalfe had planned to halt his attack at dark and to seal the enemy within Dortmund by a series of roadblocks. However, the regiment would not be able to enter the city in appreciable force if the roadblocks were to be kept in position, so this plan was abandoned and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions continued the



This 81-millimeter mortar squad advances through a Dortmund underpass to a firing position.

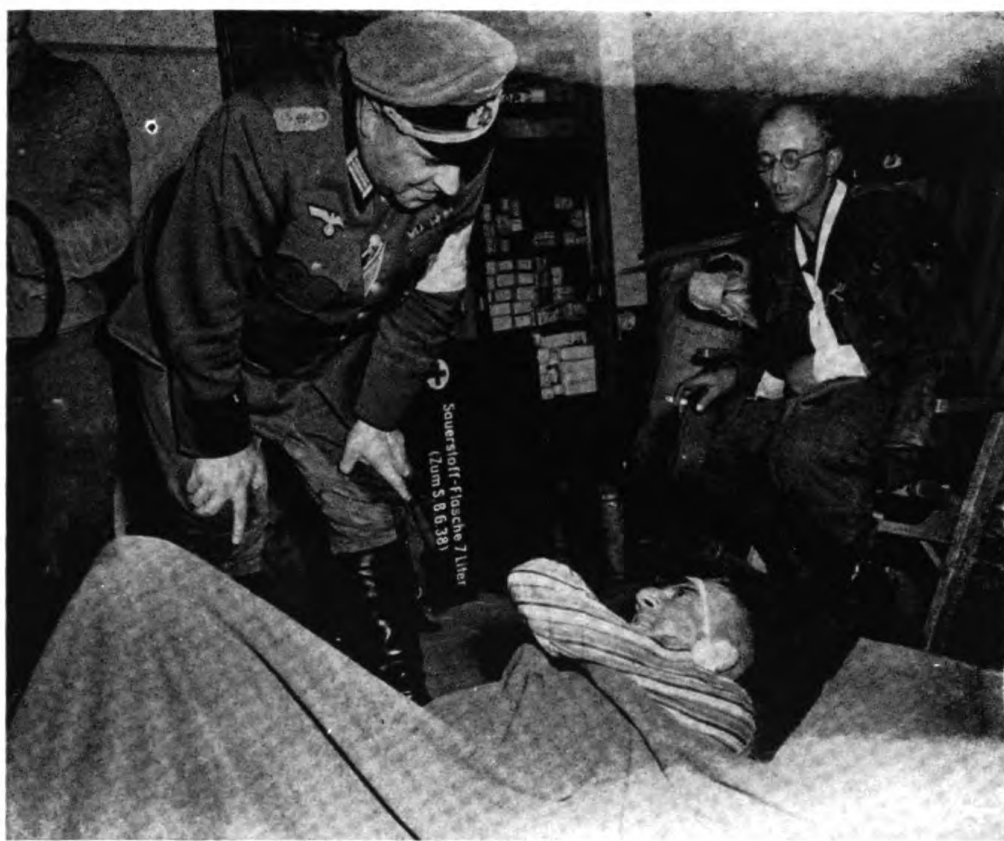


Above: Division medics treat an infantry hit by a German shell during the fight for Dortmund. His buddy lies dead beside him. Army censors blocked out the faces.

Below: German civilians and liberated slave laborers loot the basement of a large Dortmund department store a few hours after the city's capture. A drunken Russian lies in rubble in the foreground.



Above: Infantrymen hug a wall to avoid an enemy artillery barrage during the fight for Dortmund.
 Below: A view of the ruins of Dortmund, Germany's eleventh largest city before the war. The city was hit by terrific aerial bombardments long before its capture by the 95th Division.



A German medical corps colonel talks to a wounded Nazi soldier in an enemy hospital overrun by the Division in its Ruhr Pocket advance.

attack at 2000. It became obvious at this time that the regiment had broken the German resistance earlier April 12, for the stiff opposition that had been encountered in the afternoon was not met again. Company E of the 2nd Battalion and Companies I and K of the 3rd Battalion pushed the attack throughout the night of April 12-13 against little resistance. The morning of April 13, the regiment's 1st Battalion and the attached 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry were committed to clear the northern portion of Dortmund, while the 2nd and 3rd Battalions 378th Infantry mopped up in the center and southern sections of the city. With the exception of some sniper resistance, no further German opposition was encountered. One battalion commander stated that the biggest task encountered in Dortmund this day was collecting and handling the many prisoners taken during the morning.

Officially, the fall of Germany's eleventh largest city came at 1630 April 13. That such a great city should have been taken so "cheaply", once the city's strong outer defenses had been penetrated, would have

been surprising two months earlier, but Germany was cracking and the Reich's defenders were appallingly disorganized and little inclined to fight. At the time of its capture by the 378th Infantry, Dortmund was the fifth largest German city taken by the Allies (exceeded in size by Cologne, Essen, Breslau and Frankfurt). Although once a city of more than half a million population, it was estimated that little more than 100,000 lived in the city when captured by the Victory Division. The 378th Infantrymen noted that Allied air bombardment had wrecked near-complete devastation in the past four years, for Dortmund was once one of the Reich's key industrial cities and, accordingly, was the target for hundreds of air strikes. The heart of the once great city lay in ruins, the railroad depot and scores of public buildings were completely wrecked. Observers who had seen both cities stated that Dortmund was more devastated than Aachen.

As the battle for the city had drawn to a close, groups of German soldiers wandered about, seeking to surrender. Others piled their weapons and stood in orderly rows awaiting the formality of capture. Early in the day, German civilians and thousands of displaced persons (most of whom had been slave laborers) were engaged in an orgy of looting, and the city's department stores, which long ago had moved all stocks to cellars, were being sacked. The restoration of civilian order and the handling of the great numbers of displaced persons in Dortmund combined to give the Division a military government "headache", but both problems were in hand by the end of April 13.

Dortmund had been squeezed on the western and northwestern outskirts by elements of the 75th Division, but more than ninety per cent of the city was in the 95th Division zone. However, in spite of the city's size and industrial significance, its capture was scarcely noted by the American press as the Division had not been visited by war correspondents since the day following the capture of Baron Franz von Papen by Task Force Faith April 10. The Allied drive on Berlin held the news focus.¹ Although Dortmund's pre-war population was ten times as great as that of Metz, the capture of the former city could not be paralleled in any way with that of the French city. Strategically, Dortmund was of no comparable importance (with Metz) when it was captured by the Division, for its role as a major German industrial center had ended weeks before.

¹As a matter of fact, the latter part of the Division's Ruhr Pocket operation was mentioned but little by the American press and radio, as war correspondents had attached themselves to divisions which were then driving east. The Victory Division had been host to many war correspondents early in the Ruhr campaign, but (unlike the Metz and Saar battles, which had been highly publicized) the Division's name was not released to the press by the Twelfth Army Group until after Hamm had been captured.

But the capture of Dortmund didn't allow the 378th Infantry even a brief rest, for, as mentioned earlier, the Corps commander had directed that the attack be continued until the Ruhr River was reached. Accordingly, at 1330 April 13, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions attacked to the south, while the 1st Battalion patrolled Dortmund (and the attached 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry assembled in the vicinity of Gartenstadt). The two attacking battalions advanced rapidly against negligible opposition. The first objective, the Hoechst-Bergmark highway, was reached by the end of the day. The two battalions continued the attack the morning of April 14, again advancing without incident. The 3rd Battalion reached the Ruhr River (at Westhofen) by 1800, while the 2nd Battalion advanced as far south as Holzen, near which contact was made with the 379th Infantry on the left flank. At 1900, the regiment reported to the Division G-3 that its mission was completed. While the 1st Battalion continued to occupy Dortmund, the rest of the regiment prepared to move to an assembly area in the vicinity of Brackel (the move being accomplished April 15).

THE 379th INFANTRY IN TASK FORCE TWADDLE

One of the provisions of Task Force Twaddle's Field Order No. 1 directed the 379th Infantry to continue its attack to the southwest in zone to the Corps boundary (or, limit of advance, a line which ran from the vicinity of Hamm on the north to Wickede on the south). In the 379th Infantry's zone, this boundary was anchored on a point a few hundred yards west of Rhynern on the north, the village of Westhilbeck in the center, and a point a few hundred yards west of Werl on the south. Although Task Force Twaddle became operational at 1200 April 7, the operations of the 379th Infantry through April 7 have already been discussed in the second section of this chapter. The concern here, then, is the operations of the regiment from April 8 through the completion of the 379th Infantry's Ruhr Pocket commitment the afternoon of April 14.

On the regiment's right flank was the 378th Infantry, and on the left was the 8th Armored Division. By the end of April 7 the regiment held a line generally along the Rhynern-Werl highway, having secured this line in an advance to the southwest which began from the Hamm-Soest railroad early the morning of April 7. Thus, like the 378th Infantry, the 379th Infantry had only to progress a few hundred yards to the southwest to complete the first mission assigned to the regiment by Task Force Twaddle's Field Order No. 1.

The regiment resumed its attack at 0545 April 8 with its 1st and 3rd Battalions and Company G of the reserve 2nd Battalion. The right flank 3rd Battalion encountered light opposition in advancing southwest from the Rhynern-Werl highway. Company L captured Freiske on the right of the battalion zone, Company K cleared open ground in the center, while Company 1 seized Kuemp on the left of the zone. All company objectives were secured before 1700, and the battalion had thus arrived at the Corps limit of advance.

The 1st Battalion, attacking on the left, encountered equally light resistance. Company A attacked on the right of the battalion zone

to seize Hilbeck, all three rifle platoons advancing on the town with marching fire. Although the company initially received heavy small arms fire, the town was secured by 0800. A German medical detachment of fifty men was captured in Hilbeck. Shortly after securing Hilbeck, the company was directed to seize Westhilbeck, half a mile to the west and located on the Corps boundary. The mission was given to the 2nd Platoon, which took the village without incident. The battalion's left flank unit, Company C, captured Budberg with little difficulty by 0800. By mid-morning, then, the 1st Battalion had reached the Corps limit of advance. Meanwhile, Company G, which had been committed a day earlier to secure the section of Werl which was in the Division zone (all of the city north of the Unna-Soest railroad, the rest being in the 8th Armored Division zone), completed mopping up operations by 1000 and made contact with the 8th Armored Division on the left at 1915.

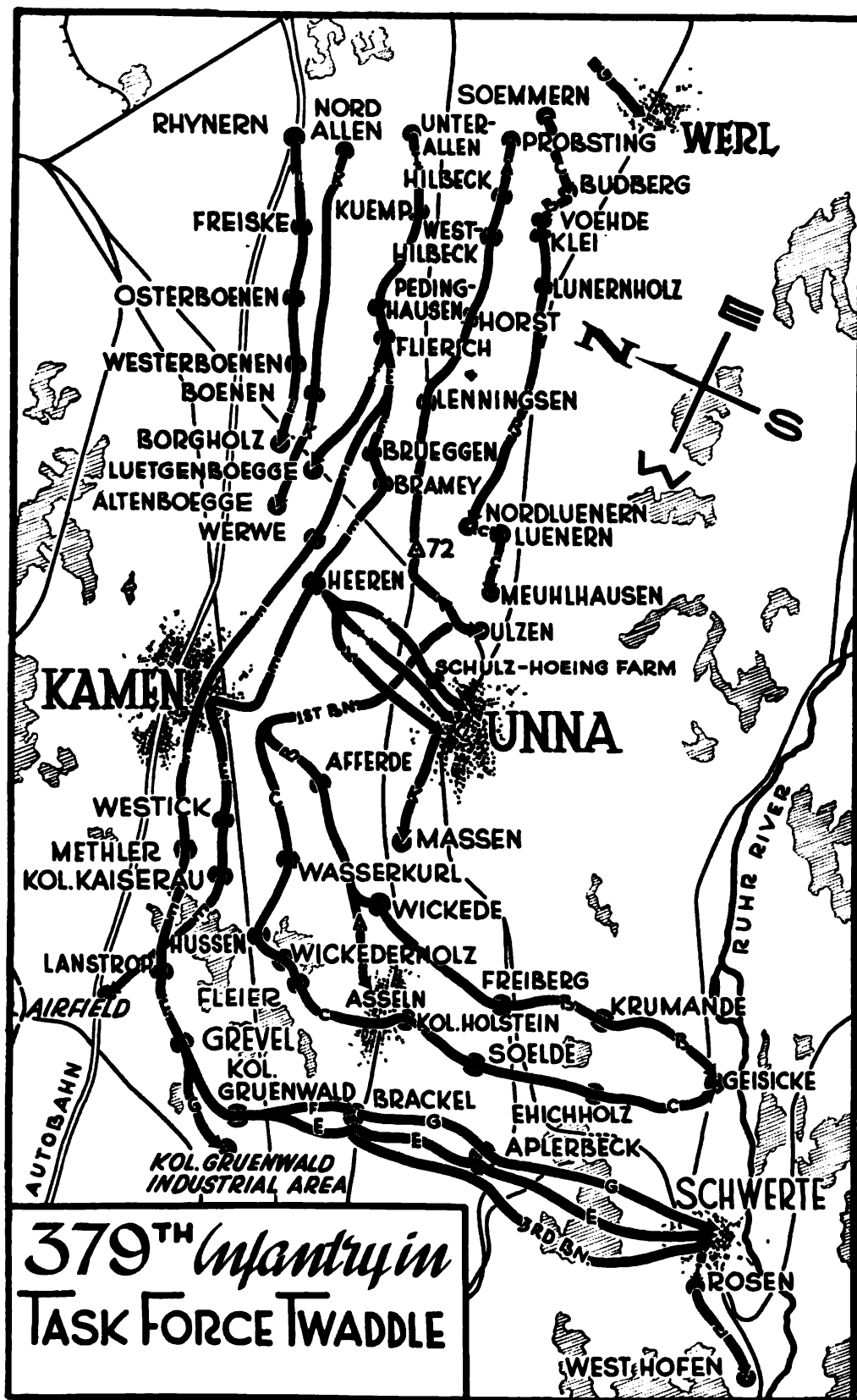
As explained in the 378th Infantry's operations during this period, Task Force Twaddle's Field Order No. 1 had directed the 378th and 379th Infantry Regiments and the 8th Armored Division to attack in zone until the line Hamm-Westhilbeck-Wickede was secured (this line was the Corps limit of advance). The field order had directed that the attack would be continued to the southwest to connect firmly with the XVI Corps after Task Force Faith had cleared the pocket between the Ruhr and Moehne rivers. This plan was changed, however, by the task force's Operations Instructions No. 1, issued late the afternoon of April 8, which directed, in part, that the 379th Infantry continue the attack to the southwest the morning of April 9. To support the 379th Infantry's attack of April 9, the 709th Tank Battalion, less Companies B and D, was attached at 2230 April 8. (The battalion's Company C had been attached to the regiment since the beginning of the Ruhr operation. Thus, the principal result of the new attachment was to add Company A to the support of the regiment.) As had already been noted in the 378th Infantry's attack of April 8, German resistance was crumbling noticeably. Throughout April 8, the 379th Infantry encountered at the most only moderate resistance, elements of the regiment receiving some artillery, machine gun and small arms fire. Unlike the 378th Infantry, however, the 379th Infantry was to encounter some stiff opposition April 9 and 10.

The regiment continued its attack at 0545 April 9. No specific objective was set up for the day, but the attack was to continue to the southwest as rapidly as possible. The 3rd Battalion, on the right, advanced almost at will. The Battalion's right flank Company L attached southwest from Freiske at 0545 and had cleared Osterboenen, Westerboenen and Borgholz by mid-afternoon. Company K, advanc-

ing in the center of the battalion zone, seized Boenen and Altenboegge against no resistance. Company I, on the left, attacked from Kuemp and captured the villages of Pedinghausen, Flierich and Luetgenboegge by early afternoon. The battalion captured many prisoners, but none of them offered a fight. Late in the day, the 3rd Battalion zone was pinched out by the advance of the 2nd Battalion, which had been committed at 1400.

The 1st Battalion, on the left of the regimental zone, did not advance as easily as did the 3rd Battalion. The battalion attacked at 0545 with Company A on the right and Company B (which attacked through Company C, the latter company then going into battalion reserve) on the left. Company A was to attack southwest to seize the hamlet of Horst, then continue to the west to capture Lenningsen. Company B was to attack to the west from Budberg to take the adjoining villages of Voehde and Klei, two and a half miles west of Budberg. Company A encountered fire from flak guns (fired horizontally) and small arms fire in attacking Horst, and Company B met fairly stiff opposition at Voehde and Klei, meeting heavy small arms and automatic weapon fire. The resistance was overcome at all points, however, as Company A assaulted and captured Horst with marching fire, then moved on to Lenningsen, while Company B took Voehde and Klei, all three villages falling by 1000. Company A secured Lenningsen by noon, capturing more than fifty willing prisoners. Company A renewed its attack at 1500, pushing southwest from Lenningsen to seize the area in the vicinity of Bench Mark No. 72, located on the railroad, which now became the 1st Battalion's right boundary. (This boundary change was made shortly after noon to allow for the commitment of the 2nd Battalion between the 1st and 3rd Battalions.) The 3rd Platoon mounted the section of tanks attached to the company, crossed to the south side of the railroad and advanced in a wide arc to the south in order that the armor could move on a road. The objective was reached without encountering the enemy, but once at the bench mark the platoon was hit by panzerfaust and rifle fire from a group of nearby houses. The 2nd Platoon was committed at this point and, together with the 3rd, Platoon, the houses south of the railroad were cleared, while the 1st Platoon cleared those north of the tracks. The position was secured by 1700 and the company set up defensive positions.

Meanwhile, following the capture of Voehde and Klei, Company B was directed to advance west to secure the hamlet of Luern Holz, then to attack south to capture Nordluern. The company advanced without meeting opposition until it was just north of Luern Holz. Heavy enemy fire was encountered here, but Luern Holz was





A sample of the Germans' self-inflicted destruction in the Ruhr Pocket. This section of the autobahn was destroyed in an effort to slow the Division's advance.

seized after a stiff fight. An indication of the amount of fighting done by Company B April 9 is the fact that the company twice was resupplied with ammunition during the day, once in the vicinity of Voehde and Klei, and again after Luenern Holz was captured. Company B. continued the attack toward Nordluenern, where stiff opposition was met again. After fighting into Nordluenern, the company was counterattacked by an estimated 100 German infantrymen at 1700. The counterattack was repulsed by 1745, all of the enemy either being killed or captured. The opposition encountered by the 1st Battalion April 9 was not to be equalled again during the battalion's Ruhr Pocket fighting. The battalion suffered ten casualties during the day, one killed and nine wounded.

As mentioned earlier, the 379th Infantry's 2nd Battalion was committed at 1400. However, the battalion's company G reverted to regimental reserve. The battalion attacked from west of Flierich with Company F on the right and Company E on the left. Company E's objective was the town of Heeren, and Company F's objective was Werwe. Both objectives were reached by 1915, Company E having secured Brueggen and Bramey in route to Heeren. Only serious opposition met during the day's drive was at Bramey. About 800 yards east of the town, Company E received heavy small arms and machine gun fire from well dug-in positions on the eastern edge of the town. While the 3rd Platoon engaged the enemy from the front, the 2nd Platoon maneuvered south of the town and assaulted it with marching fire. More than seventy-five prisoners were captured and an estimated twenty Germans were killed in the fight for Bramey. Other than this, however, the 2nd Battalion encountered little opposition. In Heeren, Company E liberated a prisoner-of-war camp containing an estimated 1,500 Russians.

The regiment resumed its attack the morning of April 10 with all three battalions. The 2nd Battalion, on the right, attacked at 0545 to seize Kamen. The 3rd Battalion passed through the rear of the 2nd Battalion at 0630 and attacked west and southwest at 0800. The 1st Battalion attacked at 0800 to capture the towns of Nuehlhausen and Luenern.

The 2nd Battalion attacked Kamen with Company F on the right and Company E on the left. Company F advanced from Werwe to the southeastern edge of Kamen with little difficulty, but Company E encountered severe opposition. The company cleared a wooded area west of Heeren against scattered resistance and under the cover of a heavy fog. As the company moved northwest toward Kamen, the fog lifted and the enemy immediately began firing small arms and machine guns at the advancing Americans from dug-in positions along

an unfinished Autobahn east of Kamen. A few minutes later the Germans added the fires of 88's and 20-millimeter flak guns from the outskirts of Kamen to the already heavy fire being received by Company E.

"The artillery forward observer was unable to contact the fire direction center by radio," Captain Lawrence G. Matthews, company commander, said in recalling the episode, "and so we were unable to call for artillery. Our attached tanks were unable to move forward to support us because of the direct enemy fire. The entire company was stopped for thirty minutes. I had more ammunition thrown at me during those thirty minutes than in any previous operation. I decided that the only thing to do was to get up and move out (as) we would probably suffer no more casualties on the move than we would lying on the ground."

The company's resulting marching fire was highly effective as the enemy had little fondness for this method of fighting and, accordingly, would withdraw into foxholes or seek whatever protection was available. The volume of Company E's marching fire quickly pinned down the defending Germans and, shortly thereafter, they were cleared from their positions. Besides capturing or killing all of the defenders, the company captured a battery of 88's, one 20-millimeter flak gun and several machine guns. This operation lasted until 0900, at which time the company reorganized, then resumed the attack, moving north along the highway connecting Unna and Kamen. The company was stalled again on the southern edge of Kamen by heavy artillery and panzerfaust fire which appeared to come from inside Kamen. With the support of tanks, however, the company literally blasted its way into Kamen, capturing twenty-two German artillery guns and several machine guns. Earlier in the morning, at the request of Lieutenant Colonel Jason L. Richmond, battalion commander, the regimental reserve Company G had been released to battalion control and by 1000 had joined Companies E and F in the attack on Kamen. The Germans were stubborn in their defense of Kamen and, although elements of the 2nd Battalion had reached the edge of the town by 0945, it was not until mid-afternoon that the town was finally cleared. Concerning Kamen, it should be mentioned that it was one of the larger towns in the Division's (and Task Force Twaddle's) path of advance. Dortmund, Hamm and Soest were the only places in the Division's zone to exceed Kamen in size.

The 3rd Battalion passed through the rear of the 2nd Battalion in the vicinity of Heeren at 0630 April 10 to attack to the southwest and seize that portion of Unna which was in the Division zone. (Like Werl, Unna was divided by a railroad. The area north of the railroad

was in the 95th Division zone, that south of the railroad was in the 8th Armored Division zone.) The battalion attacked at 0800 with Company K on the right, Company I in the center and Company L on the left of the battalion zone. The three companies advanced rapidly until about a mile and half north of the objective, at which time severe German artillery fire slowed the advance. The battalion then called for Division Artillery to fire on the German positions and, at the same time, fighter bombers dropped thirty-six 500-pound bombs into the general vicinity. (Fighter bombers had also struck at Unna April 7 and 9.) The air and artillery fire lifted at 1530 and the battalion pushed on to within a mile of Unna, at which point it checked its advance and prepared to seize the northern portion of the town the morning of April 11.

The 1st Battalion continued its attack at 0800 April 10, committing the reserve Company C to capture the towns of Luernern and Muehlhausen, while Company A was to seize a railroad underpass a little more than a mile north of Muehlhausen. Company B reverted to battalion reserve, later became regimental reserve and moved to the vicinity of Heeren.) Company A was also to drive south from the underpass and secure the village of Ulzen, less than half a mile west of Muehlhausen. Company A seized the underpass against little opposition during the morning and, at 1400, attacked to seize Ulzen, which was secured against initially stiff small arms and machine gun fire by 1900. Company C captured Luernern with ease after the town had been hit by a heavy artillery preparation and, at 1130, the company moved on Muehlhausen to the west. Heavy flak and small arms fire was encountered in the fight for Muehlhausen, but the town was secured by 1800 and the company made contact with elements of the 8th Armored Division on the south.

The 379th Infantry's advance of April 11 gained more ground than any other single day of the regiment's Ruhr operation as the enemy was pushed back more than five miles along the whole of the regimental front. With the 1st Battalion initially in reserve, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions advanced steadily until noon, when the 1st Battalion was committed, pinching out the 3rd Battalion zone. Resistance was generally light on the right of the regimental zone, but was occasionally stiff on the left.

The 2nd Battalion attacked on the right at 0800 April 11, having secured Kamen a day earlier against fairly stiff opposition. The battalion's fight for Kamen apparently had broken German resistance, for opposition was spotty and easily overcome throughout the day. Company F, on the right, advanced from Kamen to capture Methler by 1100 against negligible resistance. Before the company assaulted

the town, however, Division Artillery had shelled Methler, causing the Germans to make a disorganized withdrawal toward Dortmund. Company F continued its advance to the southwest to seize Grevel, which fell without a fight. (Late in the morning, a change in regimental boundaries was made which gave the 378th Infantry, on the 379th Infantry's right flank, some of the area south of the Autobahn. Heretofore, the Autobahn had been the boundary between the two regiments. Thus, the 378th Regiment recaptured Grevel—without opposition—after the 379th Regiment withdrew.) Company E, advancing on the left of the battalion zone, cleared the village of Westick without a fight, then moved on to Kol. Kaiserau, where the company had its only fire-fight of the day. Marching fire technique subdued the enemy in Kol. Kaiserau, while the company's attached tanks and tank destroyers engaged and knocked out two Mark V tanks south of the village. The company pushed on at 1500 against little resistance, and by dark had reached an airfield a mile and a half directly north of Grevel. The company immediately set up defensive positions around the airfield and began searching for Germans after dark. In spite of the problems offered by such an operation conducted during hours of darkness, more than 150 prisoners were captured and herded into a cellar for the night.

The 3rd Battalion continued its attack at 0645 to capture the northern portion of Unna, encountering some severe resistance. Company L, on the left of the battalion zone, advanced to the Schulz-Hoeing Farm, less than half a mile north of Unna, which was known to be a strongpoint. One of the company's sergeants, who spoke German, approached the farm in an attempt to persuade the Germans to surrender. He told the German commander that the farm was surrounded by American troops and that the buildings would be leveled by artillery if the defenders did not surrender. But the German officer replied that he was obliged to fight until forced to withdraw. The sergeant returned to the company, conveying the answer and reporting that there appeared to be about a hundred troops defending the farm. Accordingly, the attached tanks and tank destroyers were lined up and all available fire power was placed on the farm, quickly setting the buildings on fire. As the defenders began to run out of the various buildings, they were fired upon, but some escaped. At 0730 the company moved in to take the farm, then continued the drive on Unna against no resistance except occasional sniper fire. Companies I and K made slow but steady progress against small arms and machine gun fire. The two companies were into Unna by 1000 and encountered stubborn opposition from SS troops who refused to surrender, preferring to fight until killed. The two companies pro-



One of the tens of thousands of displaced persons—DP's—overrun by the Division during its Ruhr Pocket fighting.

ceeded to accommodate these troops and that portion of Unna which was in the Division zone was declared clear of the enemy by 1430. Company K moved to the southwest to capture Nassen against little resistance. By this time the 3rd Battalion zone was pinched out by the 1st Battalion. Colonel Bacon then directed the 3rd Battalion to move to the vicinity of Husen, where it would prepare to be committed April 12.

The 1st Battalion, which had captured Luenern, Muehlhausen and Ulzen a day earlier, was directed to move to a position a mile south of Kamen to attack to the southwest to pinch out the 3rd Battalion zone. The battalion attacked at 1300 April 11 (moving between the 2nd and 3rd Battalions) and captured Afferde without a fight. Company C took Wasserkurl against little opposition, making contact with the 2nd Battalion on the right. The company continued to the southwest to capture Husen, then south to capture Wickedderholz, then Fleier was captured. Only light opposition was encountered throughout Company C's drive and the company checked its advance at Fleier. Company B, attacking on the left, advanced to capture Wickedde. During its advance, the company captured an entire company of German infantry, many of whom were drunk. Fairly stiff resistance was met in Wickedde, and house-to-house fighting was necessary before the town was secured at 1600. Throughout the drive, the battalion's reserve Company A had followed Company B. At 1600, however, Company A was committed to seize Asseln. But the company encountered unexpectedly heavy resistance and by dark had secured only half of the town. The company commander requested permission to hold up for the night, and this was granted.

Thus, by the end of April 11, the 379th Infantry held a north-south line running generally from Grevel on the north to Asseln on the south, and was in position to turn its drive almost directly south to push to the Ruhr River.

Since the beginning of the 379th Infantry's Ruhr Pocket operations April 3, the regiment had advanced generally to the southwest, but by the night of April 11 the regiment had advanced as far west as possible and thus turned its attack to the south the morning of April 12 to advance to the Ruhr River. The regiment began its attack at 0545 April 12 with the 2nd Battalion on the right, the 1st Battalion on the left.

The 2nd Battalion's Company G, which had been in regimental reserve, reverted to battalion control during the night of April 11-12, and attacked to the southwest from Grevel at 0545 on the right of the battalion zone. The company's objective was an industrial area on the western edge of Kol. Gruenwald, and this was taken against light

opposition by 1130, the company then going into battalion reserve at noon. Company F attacked to the southwest from the vicinity of Grevel at 0730 on the left of Company G. Company F secured Kol. Gruenwald by 1000 and continued its attack to the south, together with Company E, to seize Brackel. Only moderate resistance was met by Company F as it pushed south to seize its section of Brackel, but Company E encountered heavy machine gun and small arms fire north of the town. Accordingly, the Company E commander deployed his two leading platoons in a skirmish line and attacked with marching fire. The enemy gave up in a hurry and thirty-five prisoners were captured. Company E continued to move toward Brackel, entering the town against little further opposition. In the early afternoon, however, Company E was counterattacked by an estimated eighty German infantrymen supported by one tank and four self-propelled 88-millimeter guns. But the German attack was quickly repulsed. By 1600 Companies E and F had cleared Brackel, at which time the reserve Company G and Company E were directed to continue the attack to the south to seize the village of Aplerbeck. Company E attacked on the right, Company G on the left, both companies meeting only light resistance as Aplerbeck was cleared by 2000.

As explained in detail in the 378th Infantry's attack of April 12, the Corps commander had directed at 1850 that Task Force Twaddle continue its mission throughout the night of April 12-13, pressing the attack vigorously until the Ruhr River was reached. The 2nd Battalion received this directive at 2100 April 12, and at 0100 April 13 the battalion continued its attack to the south with Companies E and G, Company F remaining in Aplerbeck in battalion reserve. The attacking companies advanced without supporting armor so as to move as quietly as possible and thus surprise any Germans in the zone of attack. Little opposition was met and by 0415 the two companies had reached Schwerte, located on the Ruhr River. Throughout April 13, the 2nd Battalion cleared the few remaining pockets of resistance in the vicinity of Schwerte and set up outposts and observations posts along the river. During the day more than 300 Germans crossed from the south side of the Ruhr River to surrender to 2nd Battalion troops.

In the meantime, the 379th Infantry's 1st Battalion had attacked the morning of April 12 on the regiment's left flank. By the night of April 11, the 1st Battalion held a line from Fleier to Asseln, but it will be remembered that Company A had secured only half of Asseln when the company checked its attack. Company C, which had secured Fleier April 11, was committed at 0630 April 12 to capture all of Asseln not held by Company A, the latter company becoming



These two SS troops refused to surrender.

battalion reserve. Company C cleared Asseln by 0800 and continued south to capture Kol. Holstein against light opposition. Company B attacked from Wickede, moving south to seize Freiberg against light resistance. By mid-morning, Company C was moving on Soelde, attacking to the south out of Kol. Holstein, while Company B remained in Freiberg. Company C. encountered stiff opposition on the northeastern edge of Soelde from two enemy tanks and a self-propelled gun, but these were knocked out by the company's attached tanks and tank destroyers. Company C then moved into Soelde and captured the town, where it held up until 1915, at which time Companies B and C were directed to continue the attack throughout the night until the Ruhr River was reached. Company C was to attack on the right to seize the western half of Geisecke (located four miles to the southeast on the Ruhr River), and Company B was to attack on the left of the battalion zone to seize the eastern half of Geisecke. The two companies attacked at 2100 April 12. By 2200 Company C had cleared Eichholtz against fairly stiff resistance, and an hour later Company B had secured Krumande, both hamlets being about half way to Geisecke. The companies checked their advance until 0400 April 13, when the attack was resumed. Company B had secured its half of Geisecke by 0600, and Company C had taken the western half of the town by 0900. The 1st Battalion 379th Infantry had reached the Ruhr River, and throughout April 13 and 14 the battalion engaged in mopping-up operations, patrolling the river line and outposting the river. At 1600 April 14, contact was made with elements of the 7th Armored Division on the south bank of the river. Thus, it was seen that the First U. S. Army was nearing the completion of its Ruhr Pocket mission at about the same time as was the Ninth Army.

Meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion was in regimental reserve the morning of April 12, its zone having been pinched out by the advance of the 1st Battalion April 11. The battalion began movement from the vicinity of Unna to Kol. Gruenwald at 0900 April 12. At 1600 April 12, however, the 3rd Battalion was committed on the right of the 2nd Battalion. Initially, the 3rd Battalion was given no specific objective, but was directed to attack south on the 379th Infantry's right flank. Three hours after the battalion began its attack, it received orders to continue without pause to advance to the south until the Ruhr River was reached. Accordingly, the battalion reorganized at 1900 and renewed its attack to the south at 2200. Advancing in a column of companies with Company K and a section of tanks leading, the battalion proceeded without incident to the river, entering the western half of Schwerte (the eastern half was in the 2nd Battalion zone) at 0420.

The battalion mopped up in its section of Schwerte until 1400, at which time it was directed to advance to the southwest to capture the town of Westhofen. The attack began at 1600 April 13 with Company I in the lead, followed by Companies L and K. Shortly after the attack began, heavy enemy fire was received as the Germans had directed observation on the battalion's movements. Accordingly, the battalion organized defensive positions and checked its attack to give Division Artillery an opportunity to fire on the enemy positions. The Artillery preparation was fired during the night of April 13-14, planned to continued its attack early the morning of April 14, troops were so exhausted that the batalion commander requested permission to postpone his attack until the afternoon of April 14. The request was granted, and at noon Company L passed through Company I to lead the battalion's attack. Westhofen was reached without incident, the western portion of the town having been cleared by the right flank 378th Infantry. Once Westhofen was reached, the 3rd Battalion had ended its Ruhr Pocket fighting, as had the 379th Infantry Regiment.

The old order changeth: Military government orders were posted daily in German and English as the Division advanced through the populace Ruhr Pocket.



THE 8th ARMORED DIVISION IN TASK FORCE TWADDLE

The 8th Armored Division, commanded by Major General John M. Devine, was operationally attached to the 95th Infantry Division as a component of Task Force Twaddle from 1200 April 7 to 2400 April 13. At the beginning of the armored division's attachment to Task Force Twaddle, it held a line running generally southeast from the vicinity of Werl to the Moehne River. The 8th Armored Division's mission in Task Force Twaddle was to attack to the west to make contact with elements of the XVI Corps which were striking from the northeast. On the armored unit's northern flank was the 379th Infantry Regiment and, initially, Task Faith was on its southern flank. After advancing far enough west to clear the Task Force Faith zone (which would be accomplished at Neheim), the 8th Armored Division's southern boundary was to be the Ruhr River.

By the end of April 7, the 8th Armored Division's Combat Command B held positions east and south of Werl, and Combat Command R had moved from an assembly area to positions adjacent to the Moehne River in the vicinity of Niederense. Between April 8 and 11, elements of the 8th Armored Division advanced rapidly to the west against spotty resistance. During this period, Combat Command B assaulted and seized the portion of Werl which was not in the 95th Division zone, and continued west to the eastern outskirts of Unna. Here, Combat Command A passed through Combat Command B to attack and seize all of Unna in the 8th Armored Division zone (which was eighty per cent of the town) by a maneuver which outflanked the stubborn German defenses east of the city. Combat Command A continued its attack to the west until, by the end of April 11, it had reached the 8th Armored Division's western limit of advance. Meanwhile, Combat Command R had also reached the limit of advance by the night of April 11, having advanced against generally light opposition.

By this time, the advance of 95th Division elements through the

Dortmund area had completely uncovered the 8th Armored Division's front. Thus, Combat Command A was directed to screen a portion of the armored unit's south flank, while Combat Command R mopped up the remaining enemy resistance in its zone. Although the 8th Armored Division remained attached to Task Force Twaddle until the task force was dissolved at 2400 April 13, the armored division had been alerted by the XVI Corps on April 12 to prepare for movement to the XIX Corps zone on order. Accordingly, the 8th Armored Division was relieved by elements of the 377th Infantry Regiment April 13.

Task Force Faith—April 7-13

One of the principal provisions of Task Force Twaddle's Field Order No. 1 was the establishment of Task Force Faith. Commanded by Brigadier General Don C. Faith, assistant commander of the 95th Division, Task Force Faith has already been briefly discussed early in this chapter. The task force was to clear the enemy from the pocket formed by the Ruhr and Moehne rivers, attacking from the east between these two rivers to their junction at the town of Neheim. South of the Ruhr River (which marked the southern boundary of both Task Forces Twaddle and Faith) was the zone of the First U. S. Army's III Corps. Task Force Faith was to gain and maintain contact with elements of this corps when both units had reached the Ruhr River. Finally, the task force was given the mission of protecting Task Force Twaddle's southern flank. On Task Force Faith's right flank was the 8th Armored Division, and to the rear (east) was the 4th Cavalry Group of the First Army.

Initially, the components of Task Force Faith were the 377th Infantry Regiment, the reinforced 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, the 920 Field Artillery Battalion (and its attached Company A of the 92nd Chemical Mortar Battalion), Company A of the 320th Engineer Battalion, Company A of the 802nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, Troop B of the 8th Armored Division's 88th Reconnaissance Squadron, Company A of the 320th Medical Battalion and two platoons of the 547th A.A.A. Battalion. Three other units were attached as the task force's operations progressed. The 275th Armored Field Artillery Battalion was attached at 1300 April 8, and the 360th Field Artillery Battalion and the 17th Cavalry Squadron at 0800 April 11.

Little was definitely known concerning the German's strength in the Task Force Faith zone before the attack was launched. "It can be assumed," stated the Division's summary of the enemy situation of April 7, "that the majority (of German troops) will consist of elements of units which have moved to this area as a result of the advance of the 95th Infantry Division and the 8th Armored Division.

Civilian reports which have been substantially confirmed indicate a concentration of troops in the Neheim-Arnsberg area." The terrain in the Task Force Faith zone was a heavily wooded, rugged and semi-mountainous area which was similar to the West Virginia mountain region in which the Division had maneuvered in the Spring of 1944.

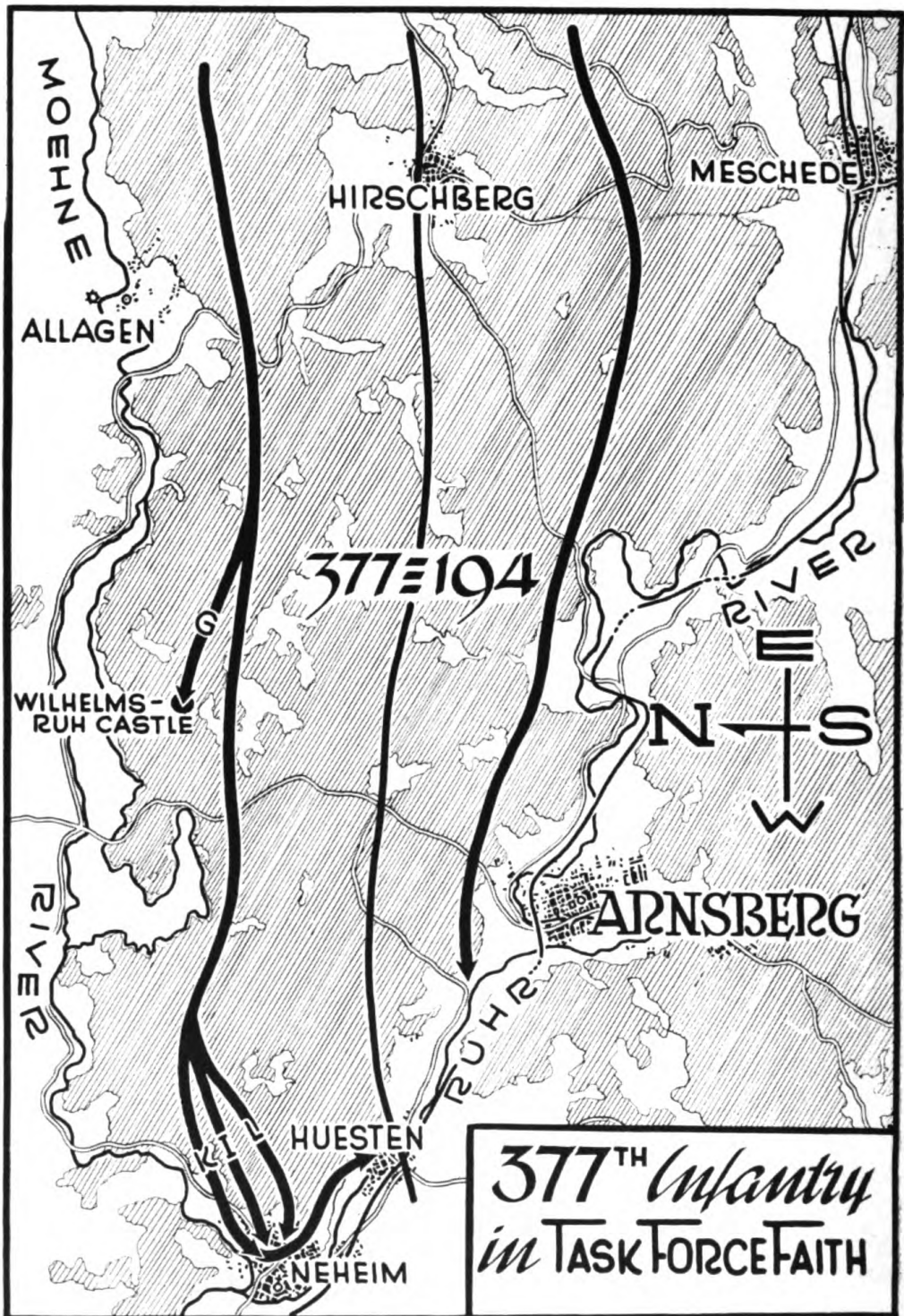
Task Force Faith became operational at 2130 April 7. At this time the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, which had crossed south over the Moehne River early that morning, had attacked about three miles into the Task Force Faith zone. The 377th Infantry, which had completely cleared Soest the morning of April 7, did not close into the Task Force Faith zone until noon of April 8, but the regiment joined the attack of the 194th Infantry at 1400, attacking on the right. Both regiments advanced against light resistance until, by the end of the day, the zone had been cleared generally east of a line from Allagen on the north to Hirschberg in the center to Meschede on the south. From the evidence of the first day's action, it was apparent that the Germans were highly disorganized and had no cohesive defense. The single element of German resistance appeared to be a Kampfgruppe (battle group) Haas,¹ formed by a Major Haas to defend the same area that it was Task Force Faith's mission to reduce. It was believed that Kampfgruppe Haas consisted of four companies of 150 to 200 men each. Most of the German soldiers forming this group were stragglers picked up by Haas' men. (At this time, this was a fairly common method employed by the Germans to offer last-ditch resistance. German soldiers who either had fled from or lost contact with their units were picked up at so-called "straggler points" and forced to serve in make-shift units similar to Kampfgruppe Haas.)

At 1550 April 8, the 194th Infantry had made contact with elements of the 9th Infantry Division (of the III Corps) that had reached the south bank of the Ruhr River in the vicinity of Meschede.

The task force's attack of April 9 began at 0800 as both regiments advanced against negligible opposition. By the end of the day, Task Force Faith had advanced generally six miles west. The 194th Infantry, in the southern section of the task force zone, advanced against light resistance, moving throughout the day. Shortly after noon, the 194th Infantry made contact with elements of the 5th Infantry Division which had reached the south bank of the Ruhr River. (The 5th Division had relieved the 9th Division in the III Corps zone.)

The advance of the 377th Infantry, in the northern part of the zone, was often halted by roadblocks, many of which were mined and

¹A German Kampfgruppe was an organization similar to an American task force.



booby-trapped. In every case, the Germans had left a few soldiers to defend the roadblocks. "These suicide sentinels would cause at least one American casualty," an officer declared, in describing the day's action, "and that was sufficient to give away their location, thus

causing their death." The regiment's 2nd Battalion alone encountered twenty-six roadblocks, one of which consisted of more than a hundred trees felled along a 150-yard stretch of a road. It was noted that the trees forming the roadblock had been freshly cut, and thus it was believed that German engineers were not far in advance of the battalion. Accordingly, elements of the battalion pushed ahead rapidly and in a few minutes encountered enemy troops feverishly building another roadblock. The fight was short and decisive. When it ended, twelve Germans were dead and fifty more surrendered. The battalion encountered no more roadblocks.

A single platoon of the 2nd Battalion's Company G captured the Wilhelmsruh Castle, south of the Moehne Lake, against little opposition. The castle's defenders were taken completely by surprise. Besides the castle, the platoon found that it was also in possession of thirty German vehicles, one Nazi major (captured in a bathtub), and a number of prostitutes who were living in trailers on the castle grounds. The grumbling major was sent to the prisoner-of-war enclosure, and the prostitutes were placed "off limits."

Both regiments attacked early the morning of April 10, and progress was rapid throughout the day. By nightfall, all of Task Force Faith's zone had been cleared except the towns of Neheim and Arnsberg, both of which were located on the Ruhr River. Only appreciable resistance met during the day was on the southern flank along the Ruhr River. This was caused by the relief of the 9th Infantry Division by the 5th Infantry Division in the III Corps zone south of the river, resulting in a delay of the 5th Division's advance to the west and, accordingly, the 5th Division's progress was somewhat behind that of Task Force Faith. Germans south of the river were thus free to fire on the advancing elements of the 194th Infantry.

Early in the afternoon, however, the 3rd Battalion of the 194th Infantry Regiment captured Baron Franz von Papen, former chancellor of Germany during the early Hitler regime, and one-time ambassador to the United States and Turkey. The sixty-five-year-old diplomat was found on the baronial estate of his son-in-law, Max von Stockhausen, who was also taken into custody. Both were captured in Stockhausen's XIV Century castle, located about ten miles west of Hirschberg. Earlier in the day, Franz von Papen Jr., an SS captain of the 5th Panzer Division, had also been captured by Task Force Faith. All three were in civilian clothes. Captain von Papen, a reconnaissance battalion commander, was convalescing from a broken hip incurred a year earlier in France. He had been discharged from a Berlin hospital three weeks before his capture, and he explained that under the circumstances a uniform was not required.

Asked if his noted father was seeking to avoid capture by the Americans, he replied, "Why should he? He has nothing to fear." There was some speculation among Division troops that von Papen might have sought capture by Allied troops, for it appeared certain that he had had no intention of fleeing. Questioned briefly by a member of the Division Public Relations Office, von Papen stated that he had no desire to flee to the National Redoubt, that there was nothing on his conscience and that the Redoubt was for Nazis with a "guilty conscience."

But eight months later, von Papen, together with 19 other Nazis, was on trial for his life before the International War Crimes Tribunal in Nuremberg. His defense council was his son, who had studied law for one year at Georgetown University in Washington, D. C., a few years before the war.

When captured, von Papen appeared to be somewhat hard of hearing, and he explained that, "I am an old man, now." A few hours after he was taken into custody, von Papen, his son and his son-in-law were brought to the Division command post, then located in Werl. He appeared tired and drawn, and there was little resemblance between the von Papen of April 10, 1945, and the one who had been withdrawn as the Kaiser's ambassador to Washington in 1915 after the United States had accused him of cooperating with espionage agents and generally fomenting ill relations between the two countries not then at war.

Werl, incidentally, was von Papen's birthplace, and the 95th Division had encountered the baron indirectly once before. During the Division's drive to the Saar, his Wallerfangen estate had been overrun by the 377th Infantry. Apparently much interested in the estate, he asked if the place had been destroyed and was told that German artillery had accounted for much of the destruction. Von Papen later disclosed that he had departed from Wallerfangen only a few days before the Division's arrival.

General Twaddle told von Papen that he would be sent to higher headquarters, (he was taken to Headquarters Ninth U. S. Army the night of his capture). When von Papen said he had left the Stockhausen estate "hurriedly" and had not eaten, he was fed at the Division Headquarters kitchen.

Returning, again, to the Task Force Faith operation, the 3rd Battalion 377th Infantry attacked at dawn April 11 to seize the town of Neheim. The battalion advanced with Company K on the right, Company I in the center and Company L on the left, and by 0900 the high ground on the northern edge of the town was secured. Before noon, the battalion had captured the town against negligible resist-

ance, capturing almost 500 prisoners in three hours. Shortly after noon, Company K continued the attack to the southeast to capture the village of Hueste against no opposition. Thus, the town of Arnsberg, astride the Ruhr River in the 194th Infantry's zone, was the only remaining portion of the Task Force Faith area not cleared by 1300 April 11. However, a boundary change placed Arnsberg in the 5th Division zone and, accordingly, Task Force Faith had completed



General Twaddle talks with Baron Franz von Papen a few hours after the German diplomat's capture by the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, attached to Task Force Faith. Franz von Papen Jr., an SS captain, is on the left.

its assigned mission of clearing the enemy from the pocket formed by the Ruhr and Moehne rivers.

The 194th Glider Infantry Regiment was relieved of attachment to Task Force Faith (and to Task Force Twaddle) at 1530 April 11 as was the 275th Armored Field Artillery Battalion at 1500, the 360th Field Artillery Battalion at 1200, the 2nd Battalion 377th Infantry at 1500 (which then became Division reserve), Troop D of the 88th Reconnaissance Squadron at 1200, Company A 92nd Chemical Mortar Battalion at 1300 and Company C of the 320th Engineer Battalion at 1400, all of the above organizations reverting to parent unit control. At 0800, the 17th Cavalry Squadron had been attached to Task

Force Faith to effect relief of the 194th Infantry, the relief being completed by 1000. Task Force Twaddle's Operations Instructions No. 2, issued April 11, provided in part, that the 17th Cavalry Squadron would also relieve elements of the 377th Infantry as the advance of the 5th Division south of the Ruhr River uncovered the regiment's south flank.

There was little that remained for Task Force Faith to do on April 12. The town of Arnsberg was contained on the north while the 5th Infantry Division captured the town from the south, and elements of the task force mopped up the few remaining isolated pockets of resistance between the Ruhr and Moehne rivers. Company A of the 320th Engineer Battalion was relieved of attachment to the task force at 1200 April 12, and at noon April 13 Task Force Faith was dissolved.

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Although Division troops were not aware of the fact at the time, their battle in the reduction of the Ruhr Pocket was to be their last in World War II. The German surrender came less than a month after the Victory Division had completed its mission in the Ruhr basin, and three months later came the capitulation of Japan and the end of the Second World War.

Officially, the 95th Infantry Division cleared the last of enemy resistance in its zone of the Ruhr Pocket at 1900 April 14. It is difficult, if not impossible, to assess the strategic results of the Division's Ruhr Pocket campaign. For, even at the beginning of the operation, the Germans were nowhere able to make more than a delaying, last-ditch stand. The Division's Metz and Saar campaigns, on the other hand, had been of considerable importance to the over-all Corps and Army plan. Perhaps the principal tactical importance of the Ruhr Pocket operation as a whole was that it prevented the enemy from breaking through the pocket and coming to the aid of German forces in the east. Had the Germans accomplished such a breakthrough in force, it is possible that the war might have lasted a few weeks longer.

But such a breakthrough never came close to being a reality. In the Division zone, the enemy had been highly disorganized and confused. By the end of the operation, the Division's prisoner-of-war enclosure had recorded prisoners from six German divisions and 157 miscellaneous units, an indication that the enemy had used all troops available, but to little advantage once Division troops had pierced what little organization the enemy had been able to assemble south of the Lippe River. Once this was smashed, coordinated German resistance was broken. Small units fought from advantageous terrain, roadblocks and towns with varying degrees of determination,

but such opposition only briefly delayed the steady advance of the Victory Division.

In the Division's three previous offensive operations (the reduction of Fortress Metz, the drive to the Saar and subsequent fighting in the Siegfried Line east of the Saar, and the eleventh-hour Rhine commitment), the Germans had suffered approximately four-to-one casualties in opposing the Victory Division. But in the Ruhr Pocket campaign, enemy casualties reached the amazing ratio of slightly more than thirty-six-to-one. A conservatively estimated 1,034 Germans were killed, 1,365 were wounded and 12,836 were captured by the end of the Division's Ruhr campaign. (Although the Division began military government work following the Ruhr operation, 4,393 more prisoners were taken by the end of the month, bringing the total to 17,229 prisoners for the entire Ruhr commitment.) Between April 3 and 14, fifty-five Division officers and men were killed in action, 352 were wounded and twelve were listed as missing in action; thus, the cost in human lives was comparatively light, both in comparison with the enemy's losses and in comparison with the Division's three previous campaigns.

In its Ruhr Pocket campaign, the Division conquered 432 square miles of Germany, and 256 cities, towns and villages were captured or overrun. (The above statistics do not include the seventy-five square miles conquered and the eighty-five towns and villages captured by the 8th Armored Division during that unit's operational attachment to the 95th Division between April 7 and 13.)

Effective and close air support and the accurate fire of the 95th Division Artillery's four battalions were noteworthy throughout the Ruhr drive, which began under the control of the XIX Corps and at 0600 April 9 came under the control of the XVI Corps. The capture of Baron Franz von Papen was a combat "bonus", but the escape from Dortmund of fifty-six-year-old Generaloberst Walter Model was an expected disappointment. Model, most famed for his leadership on the Russian front, was believed to have left Dortmund by plane the night of April 12-13.

The Division was confronted by one problem in its Ruhr Pocket operation with which it had had little trouble previously. The feeding and control of the thousands of Allied prisoners of war and displaced persons liberated by elements of the Division during the advance in the Ruhr Pocket became so great a problem that, occasionally, it proved to be more troublesome than the tactical operation. By the end of the Division's Ruhr commitment, it was estimated that more than 77,000 French, Belgian, Dutch, Russian and Polish soldiers and civilians had been liberated during the advance. Of this number,

more than 62,000 were Russians. Because of the rapidly moving situation, it was a heavy burden to transport food to these persons, although captured enemy vehicles were employed to assist in this work. Much of the food given these people came from captured German warehouses. However, the problems brought about by the displaced persons and liberated prisoners of war are more fully discussed in the next chapter.

In a history of this nature, which is primarily concerned with the Division's tactical operations, too little attention is given to the work of such service organizations as the 95th Quartermaster Company, the 95th Signal Company and the 795th Ordnance Company. Obviously, the infantry's advance would be impossible without the work of these organizations. The following statistics, however, serve as an indication of some of the tasks accomplished by these units during the month of April. The statistics were compiled by the Division G-4 Section and, accordingly, are primarily concerned with supply alone.

The Division Signal Supply Section hauled approximately 126 tons of wire, twenty tons of batteries and fourteen tons of miscellaneous signal equipment. This serves, then, as some indication of the amount of wire laid by the 95th Signal Company and individual unit communication sections. The communication net maintained by the signal company, including telephone and radio nets, was comparable to that which is maintained by an American city of 20,000 population, but the signal company's task was accomplished under severe battle conditions.

The Division Ordnance Supply Section replaced a total of 2,399 major items of ordnance equipment and hauled approximately thirty tons of cleaning and preserving material and miscellaneous spare parts, tires and tubes. The 795th Ordnance Company's Automotive Section performed a total of 211 vehicle work orders, recovered and evacuated sixty-four vehicles, inspected and evacuated fifty-five foreign vehicles and performed a total of 274 miscellaneous work orders. The ordnance company's Armament Section performed 564 work orders on artillery equipment, small arms and instruments. The supply of ammunition, too, is an ordnance function. Records of the Division Ammunition Office for the month of April show that more than 1,328 tons of artillery ammunition were expended during the month, fifty-three tons of mortar ammunition, twenty tons of small arms ammunition and more than a ton of grenades and half a ton of rockets also being expended.

The 95th Division Quartermaster Company hauled 3,782 tons of food,

fuel and other supplies, in addition to transporting thirty-three tons of post exchange supplies (cigarettes, candy, toothpaste and related supplies).

The above statistics do not reflect all of the work accomplished by the three service companies during April, but they show more clearly than has been done heretofore the tremendous tasks undertaken by these units.

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THE BREMEN SHIPYARDS AND MILITARY GOVERNMENT

The 95th Division, from the conclusion of the Ruhr Pocket operation April 16 to its relief from all assignments on May 20, was engaged primarily in military government. During this period, however, a special mission was assigned to the 378th Infantry Regiment from April 19 through May 8, and this special mission will be described before an account is given of the activities of the Division as a whole.

On April 19 the 378th Infantry Regiment¹ was directed to move from the vicinity of Dortmund north to an assembly area about fifteen miles south of Bremen.¹ The regiment closed in at 1800, with the 1st Battalion in Hallstedt, the 2nd Battalion in Neubrichhausen, and the 3rd Battalion at Heiligenfelde. At this time the 378th Infantry was attached to U. S. Naval Task Force 126, which was in turn attached to the XXX British Corps.

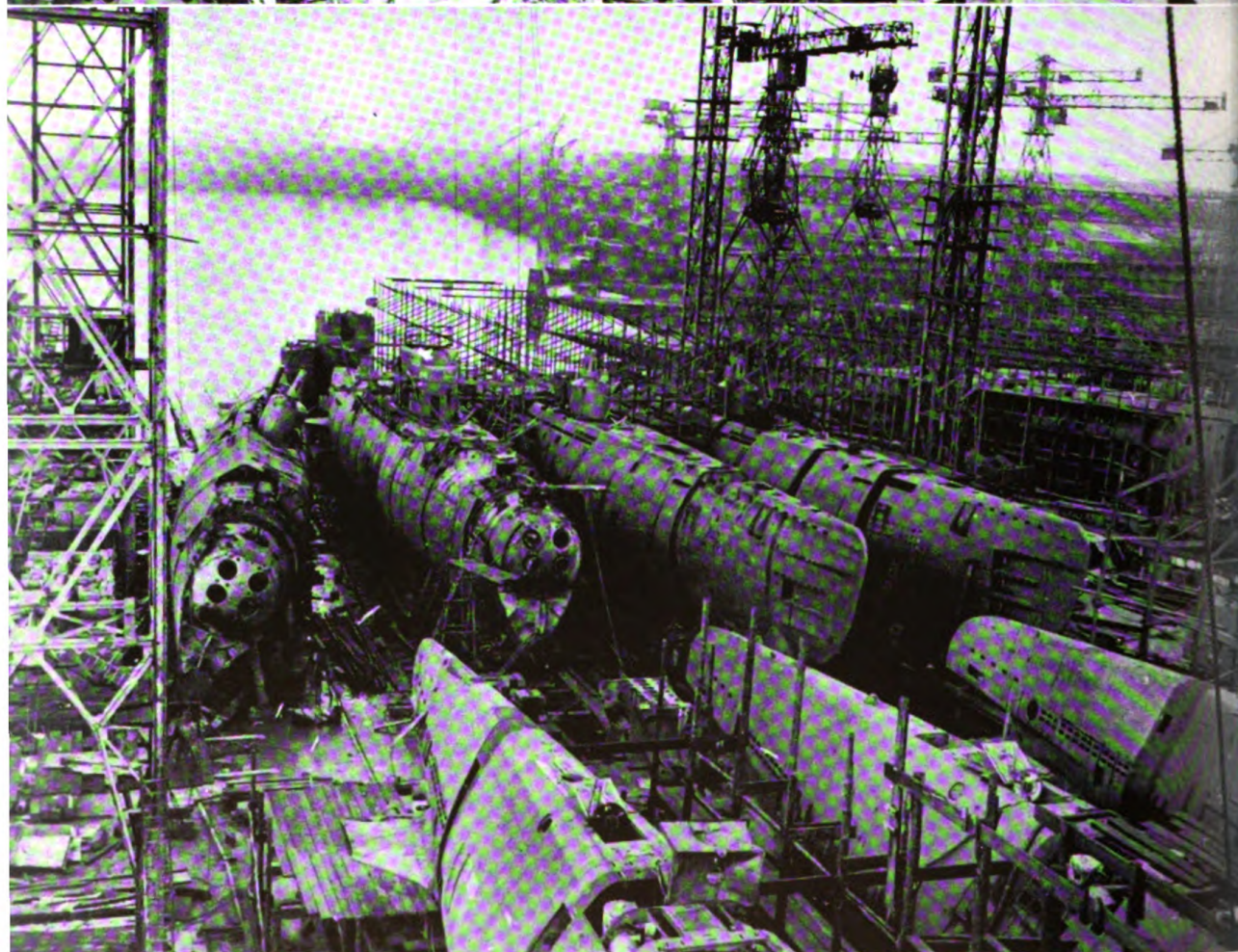
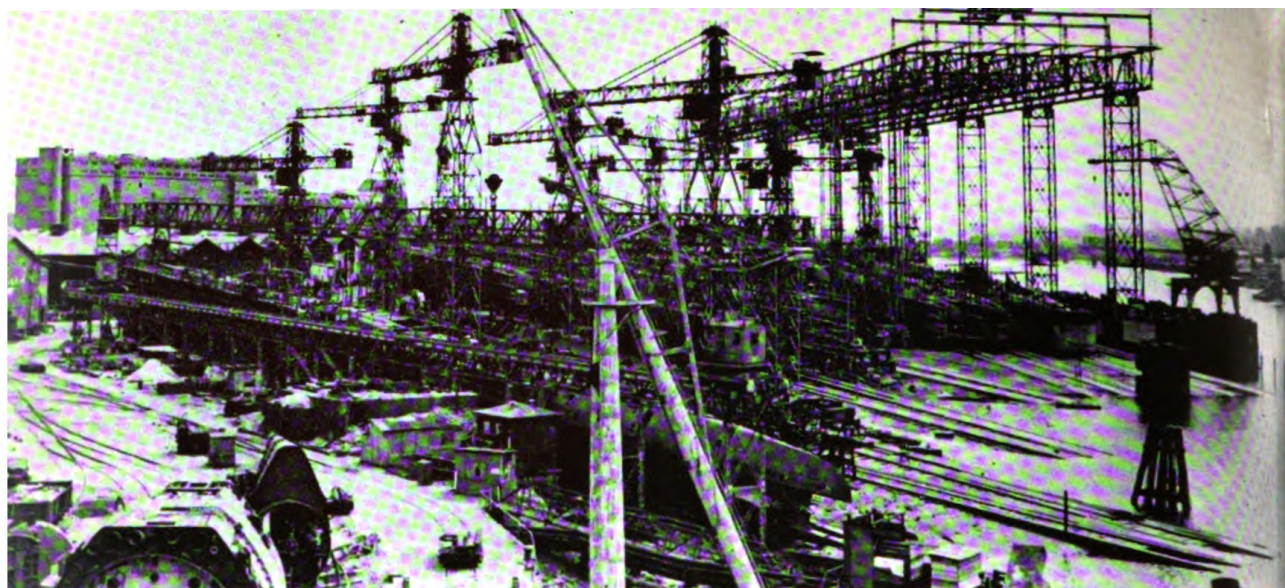
The mission of Task Force 126 was to take over and make ready for use the harbor and dock area of Bremen and later of Bremerhaven when these had been captured by the British. The general mission of the 378th Infantry was to give to Task Force 126 protection and security during its work. In addition, the regiment was to be prepared to send parties aboard any large ships found in the harbor in order to prevent sabotage. In this special mission, the regiment was to be assisted by specialists provided by the task force. The whole operation was a part of the plan which made Bremen and the surrounding area an American enclave in the region of British occupation.

From April 21 through 27, the 378th Regiment conducted training and rehabilitation in the vicinity of Neubrichhausen. On April 28, a reconnaissance party reconnoitered the docks and the quartering area, and April 30 the 2nd Battalion moved to Bremen and undertook

¹The following attachments were made to the 378th Infantry at this time: Company B 320th Medical Battalion, Water Point Detachment 320th Engineer Battalion, Radio and Wire Detachment 95th Signal Company, counter-intelligence and interrogation of prisoner of war teams of the 95th Division.



A view of downtown Bremen during the 378th Infantry Regiment's occupation of the city.



Above: Part of Bremen's great submarine construction yards.
Below: A closeup view of submarines under construction in Bremen. These yards and the Bremen harbor were guarded by the 378th Infantry Regiment following the city's capture by British troops.

the guard of the Uebersee Hafen and of the ship-building yards as ordered by Task Force 126. Two rifle companies, part of the heavy weapons company, and part of headquarters company moved to the dock area; the rest of the battalion remained in a quartering area in Bremen.

In the dock area, one slip and one ship yard were taken over. All except army and navy personnel were evacuated, and the district was sealed off with barbed wire. In addition, 57-millimeter antitank guns were placed at the end of the slip ready to fire on any raiding party or demolition group coming by boat. However, no resistance was encountered, and the work of the Naval task force proceeded without interruption.

Later, the 1st and 3rd Battalions were moved to Bremen. They remained in the city and were not employed in the dock area. On May 4, a change of attachment was made. The 378th Infantry was relieved of attachment to the Naval task force and was attached to the XXX Corps by Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force; by the XXX Corps it was attached to the Bremen garrison. The work of the 2nd Battalion continued without change under this new arrangement. The 1st and 3rd Battalions were given security missions within the city of Bremen and undertook the guard of designated installations such as the law courts and the city hall. The Bremen garrison, meanwhile, undertook the mission of perimeter security.

On May 8, the regiment was relieved by elements of the 29th Infantry Division. It reverted to 95th Division control and moved the same day to an assembly area southwest of Muenster.

Meanwhile, at 1800 April 16, the Division had begun Phase No. 2 of military government. Phase No. 2, in contrast to the earlier temporary solutions employed during the period of continuing tactical operations, was intended as preparation for permanent occupation. The Division area of military government responsibility extended from Muenster south to Werne and Langschede, all inclusive; then east along the Ruhr River to Nuttlar (inclusive), Geseke (exclusive) and Paderborn (exclusive); then northwest to Brackwede, Halle and Hitler, all inclusive; and then southwest to Muenster. Originally, this area had been assigned to the British for military government, but eventually only the cities of Hamm, Unna and Dortmund with Stadtkreis of each remained under the control of British detachments. Several changes in the area of responsibility were made between April 16 and May 20. On April 25, the Division zone was shifted somewhat to the south since it had been relieved in part of the northern sector by elements of the 55th A.A.A. Brigade, and in the southeast the Divi-

sion had relieved elements of the 75th Infantry Division. On May 1, some minor changes of boundary were effected so that the Division zone corresponded with the German administrative districts. Finally, by May 4, another interchange of territory was effected between the 95th Division on the one hand and the 55th A.A.A. Brigade and the 79th Infantry Division on the other hand.

The areas assigned to the Division were in part industrial and in part agricultural, and the two types of economy had been variously affected by the war. In the towns and villages of the agricultural region, there had been little damage by air attack, and the arrival of evacuees from the cities had increased the population an average of twenty-five per cent. The larger cities and their industries had, however, been very heavily hit. The population had been reduced to perhaps a third or a quarter of its normal level, and industrial activity had virtually stopped. Dortmund and Muenster, for example, could no longer be called cities in a functional sense. They continued to exist only as dwelling places and to a small extent as administrative centers; they were parasitic on the countryside much as had been the Roman cities of the early Middle Ages.

Within the Division area, the most pressing problem of military government was not the reestablishment and control of an ordered German society but rather the immediate danger resulting from the presence of a large number of displaced persons, formerly a repressed minority in the Nazi system, now a free and possibly anarchic element. The number of displaced person's varied with the changes in Division boundaries, but the average was about 60,000 and the peak 112,000. The first aim of military government was to prevent the growth of any large-scale movement of pillaging or looting, whether by these displaced person's or by Germans, and this was accomplished by setting guards on all important stores and warehouses and by using the military as a temporary police wherever disorder threatened. The second aim was to collect these displaced person's into camps or Lagers and to segregate them by nationalities as far as possible, in order to be prepared for repatriation whenever that should prove practical. Medical care had to be provided, and an attempt was made to reduce the danger of epidemic by systematic use of insecticides. Food had to be provided, and in general German stores could be used for this purpose. (This was done with caution since military government did not wish to deplete German reserves to such an extent as ultimately to make necessary direct Allied aid to Germany.)

The second main problem of military government was the restoration of an ordered German society. A local administration had to be confirmed or established, and this was done with the aid of the

Counter-intelligence Corps. In general, no complete purge of all Nazis could be attempted without resulting in too extensive a use of the administratively inexperienced and of the 'lunatic fringe' of the opposition. The most prominent party members had fled or been subject to automatic arrest, the more 'fanatical' were eliminated, and the administration was placed for the most part in the hands of the older local Buergermeister and of the bureaucrats whose connection with the party had been in part at least professional necessity. The police force was screened in much the same way, and the 'Nazis' who remained were largely those whose connection with the party began in 1937 or 1938. After screening, the police were allowed to resume their duties, and a military government judicial system was established with general, intermediate and summary military government court officers for the entire division area.

Between April 25 and May 10, sixty-seven cases were tried. The accused were predominantly Germans, but a number of displaced persons were also brought before the courts. The most common crimes were looting, illegal possession and violation of curfew regulations. The punishment varied with the circumstances; the sentences for looting, for example, ranged from 60 days to year's imprisonment, while those for violation of curfew regulations included fines of from 50 to 2,000 Reichsmarks.

In the field of economic life, the policy of military government has been to expedite a return to normal. The earlier "stand fast" order was revoked and all Germans were allowed to move within the Division area without pass in order that they might return to their farms and businesses. An attempt was made to restore damaged public utilities. First, the most essential stores were reopened, bakeries, butcher stores and drug stores. Then, other businesses were encouraged to reopen, and the smaller factories, such as those making furniture, were urged to resume production. In the case of large-scale industry, as for example steel mills, action was delayed pending decisions of policy.

In general and pragmatically speaking, the Germans were more than willing to cooperate, and within the Division area there was almost nothing of the irregular opposition of the Werewolf or Freikorps type. Those called on to cooperate were willing to do so, and there was no apparent fear of associating with military government. (The unspoken feelings of the Germans cannot be analyzed here, but there are several factors which can partly explain the apparent absence of the bitterness which might have been expected. In the first place, the Germans of this district knew that the war had been lost for a long time before the arrival of the Americans. For



Above: Here is one group of the thousands of displaced persons administered by the Division during its military government operations.

Below: Citizens of all nations were represented in the Division's many camps for displaced persons. Here are three Russians during a May Day observance.

them, the coming of the Americans did not mean stunning defeat, but the cessation of horror and destruction which had become senseless. In the second place, the bombing of the civilians had continued to a point where even the civilians had something of the soldier's impersonal feeling toward his opponents.)

During the period from April 16 through May 9, the policies outlined above were enforced, and by the end of the period the most pressing problems were well on the way to solution. The displaced persons had been brought under control and segregated in camps or Lagers, an administration and a police backed up by a judiciary had been established, and the first steps had been taken toward a restoration of economic life and public services.

On May 10, by Corps instructions, the Division lost a large share of its previous responsibilities within its assigned area. On that date, Military Government Detachment 307 (British), operating directing under the XVI Corps, assumed full responsibility for military government in the Corps area, to include the following: 1. Civil administration. 2. Agencies for public welfare. 3. Civil police and fire departments. 4. Military government and civil courts. 5. Banking and postal systems. 6. Restoration of production and maintenance of goods and services. 7. Revival of German agriculture. 8. Restoration of public utilities. 9. Public health organizations.

In accordance with Corps instructions, the military government commanders maintained close liaison with area commanders after May 10 and were able to call on them for assistance for the following general purposes: 1. The use of counter-intelligence corps personnel for screening of civilians and counter-intelligence investigations. 2. The furnishing of troops for security of installations vital to military government activities. 3. The use of motor transportation for transporting food and for other transportation emergencies if necessary. 4. Military assistance in the restoration of public utilities and lines of communication.

In the assistance of military government detachments the most important work was done by the Division Counter-Intelligence Corps Team, commanded by Captain August K. Bott. Here, again, the activities after May 10 were largely a continuation of those of the previous period. A total of 106 arrests were made during the period May 9 through 20, making a grand total for the 95th Division of 319 for the period from April 16, when Phase No. 2, of military government began, to May 20, when the Division was relieved by the 35th Division. By May 12, thirteen counter-intelligence corps officers had been established in the Division area. Of special missions performed by the counter-intelligence corps, the most important was the

sending of the majority of its agents to Muenster on 14 May to screen some displaced person's who broke into a U. S. mail car there.

There remain the missions which were under Division control even after May 10. Seven are listed in the Corps instructions: 1. Occupation, military police and the security of the assigned area. 2. Suppression of resistance of all types. 3. Establishment and operation of necessary patrol, roadblocks and other necessary security measures. 4. The provision of adequate guard for intelligence targets and other designated installations. 5. The care, control and repatriation of displaced persons, to include collection and segregation of displaced person's, establishment and operation of displaced persons camps, and movement of displaced person's to repatriation centers. 6. The operation, care, control and administration of Allied prisoner of war camps. 7. Coordination with military government detachment commanders on matters relating to military government mission.

Of these missions, those relating to security were accomplished by routine measures, and no significant resistance was encountered. For May, as for April, the most important problem of military government remained the displaced person's. While the number varied with changes in the division boundary and area, the average was about 60,000, and more than a hundred camps were under Division control. Relatively few were evacuated, although about 1,400 French and Belgium and about 1,300 Dutch were returned to their respective countries. The feeding of the displaced person's was accomplished in the same way as before May 10 with some of the food obtained by levying upon Buergermeisters and the remainder obtained by requisitions upon the Ninth U. S. Army.

In addition to these displaced person camps, the Division had a number of Allied prisoner of war camps under its control. During the first days of the month there were approximately 70,000 Allied prisoner of war in Division camps, but with the change of boundary this dropped to an average of about 18,000. By far the largest percentage of these were Russian or Polish, and most of the small number of French, Belgian, and Dutch had been evacuated at the end of April. On May 20, for example, after part of the camps had been turned over to the 35th Division, there were 5,384 Russians and 455 Poles out of a total of 5,936.

During the last days of April and the first days of May, the Division took action with respect to three mass murders and burials which had come to light in its area. The general pattern was the same in each case. When the military government learned of the site of the burials, it ordered the local Buergermeister to have the bodies ex-



These Russians, part of a group of sixty men, ten women and one child, were clubbed and shot to death by their German overlords at Warstein. Buried in a common grave, which was discovered by Division troops. Germans were forced to exhume the bodies, dig individual graves and observe the bodies enmasse before funeral services.

humed. The local citizens were then compelled to dig individual graves for the victims, and to file past the bodies before the funeral services. In the opinion of most observers, the German attitude was one of apathy toward the crimes and of irritation toward inconvenience.

The case of Warstein may be taken as typical. On April 26, the existence of a mass grave was reported. May 3, the Buergermeister was ordered to have the bodies exhumed. Seventy-one bodies were found, mostly of Russians, including sixty men, ten women and one child. The individual graves were dug by the Germans May 4, and 8,000 residents of the district were compelled to observe the remains before the funeral services.

The case was investigated for future action by the War Crimes Board and the following tentative reconstruction was made. During the period March 18 through 26, there was a large movement of slave laborers to the east, and about 700 of these were near Warstein at the time. Some attempt was made to control them by gathering them

into camps, but it was not completely successful. According to popular rumor, Reichsfuehrer SS Heinrich Himmler was there at the time and while driving on a nearby road which was cluttered with these slave laborers, ordered them to be shot. In any case, it appears that on the night of March 20-21 these seventy-one were clubbed and shot to death, under conditions of the greatest secrecy, in the Langenbach Tal near Warstein. The SS Sonderkommando (Stab Kammler) stationed at Suttrop was thought to have been responsible for the orders resulting in this killing. At the time the investigation was made, however, the Germans were found to be still afraid to talk and no actual witness of the mass murder had been interviewed.

REDEPLOYMENT AND INACTIVATION

A War Department letter dated May 29, 1945, directed the 95th Division to prepare for redeployment to the Pacific Theater through the United States. The Division was informed of the fact by the XVI Corps a few days later, and thus ended a two- to three-weeks period of speculation by troops as to whether the Division was to be sent direct to the Pacific or through the U. S. To a man, the Division was elated, because redeployment through the U. S. also included 30-day recuperation and rehabilitation furloughs at home for all officers and men. Many were incredulous and found the good news difficult to believe.

But the Victory Division was soon on the long road home. The movement from the vicinity of Luedinghausen, Germany, to an assembly area at Camp Old Gold, France (near Le Havre, the port of embarkation), was made by rail and motor beginning June 12, all units closing into Camp Old Gold by the night of June 16. The trip was a comparatively pleasant one for troops who moved by motor, much of the route through Belgium and France being scenic. Overnight bivouacs were in the vicinities of Liege, Belgium, and Cambrai, France. But the men who moved by rail travelled in the World War I famed "40 and 8's", and the trip for them was exhausting and dull. Camp Old Gold was one of several assembly areas in the vicinity of Le Havre, and was a huge, bustling tent city which served as a temporary home for units being redeployed through the U. S. All of the Division's vehicles and much equipment were turned in during the brief stay at Camp Old Gold, all clothing and equipment to accompany troops were packed, many units awarded decorations, and all enlisted men received the "Eisenhower" combat jackets. Within four days the Division was readied for embarkation, the 377th Infantry Regiment being the first unit to sail on June 21.

The Division returned to the U. S. aboard five ships: the **Monticello**, the **Mariposa**, the **General Gordon**, the **General Blatchford** and the **Marine Raider**. All vessels were crowded, but the return trip was much faster than had been the voyage to Great Britain almost a



Before the Division returned to the United States, then Under Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson visited troops at Erwitte, Germany.

year earlier, for no enemy action was expected and zig-zagging to avoid submarines was unnecessary. Black-out restrictions were lifted and the ocean was comparatively calm throughout the return voyage. The **Mariposa** and the **General Blatchford** docked at Boston, the **Monticello** and the **Marine Raider** at New York, and the **General Gordon** at Newport News, Virginia. Flag-bedecked tugs and other small vessels met the returning veterans as the big ships came into their respective harbors accompanied by the blasts of fog horns, whistles and sirens which saluted the Division's troops. The moment was an unforgettable one for most of the "Iron Men of Metz", who were quickly whisked off their ships and to nearby assembly areas.

At the assembly areas, troops received a long dreamed of homecoming meal, including steaks, ice cream and fresh milk, and had their first opportunity to phone their homes. Within twenty-four hours, the men were on their way to the personnel centers nearest their respective homes, and once there they were processed—new clothes, back pay, orientation and furlough orders—and sent home for thirty days. The dream that was first molded a year earlier when the 95th Division had embarked for Europe, and which was fully constructed on the battlefields of Metz, the Siegfried Line, the Rhine and the Ruhr Pocket, had come true. For thirty days, at least, there was no war for the Victory Division. Throughout the month of July the 95th

Division was almost a nonentity and its officers and men were spread throughout the nation.

In the early days of August the Division began assembling at its new permanent station, Camp Shelby, Mississippi, to prepare and train for combat in the Pacific Theater. But world events that occurred as troops were pouring into Camp Shelby were shaping a destiny for the 95th Division which was to be far different from the one initially planned. The terrifying atomic bomb was dropped on the military base city of Hiroshima August 6. Two days later the Soviet Union declared war on Japan and within a few hours the Red Army was again on the march, this time driving with powerful blows into the pride of Japanese military power, the Kwantung Army of Manchuria. Then, on August 9, the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. General of the Army George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff, described the Japanese situation as "hopeless". On August 10 the Japanese sued for peace on the general terms enunciated by the Allied powers at the Potsdam Conference.

But no change was made in the disposition of the 95th Division for three weeks. On August 16 the Division was alerted for movement to the Pacific. Three days earlier a memorandum was published outlining redeployment training at Camp Shelby. Purpose of the training was "to recondition individuals mentally and physically; to revitalize units and integrate new personnel into them; to provide additional instruction specifically applicable to operations against the Japanese; to perfect existing combat technique; and to maintain high morale, discipline and combat efficiency." The four-week training period was to begin August 20 and to end September 15. Included in the training program were such subjects as Japanese Tactics and Technique, First Aid, Field Sanitation and Prevention of Tropical Diseases, Bayonet Training, Marksmanship and Combat Firing, and Chemical Warfare Training. Many units were able to begin their training before August 20.

Meanwhile, the critical score for separation of enlisted men remained at the eighty-five-point level established by the Army shortly after V-E Day, and no critical score for the separation of officers or warrant officers had yet been announced. However, it was not planned that enlisted men with only a few points less than the established critical score should be sent to the Pacific Theater, for these men would obviously be eligible for separation within a reasonably short time. Accordingly, the Division was directed to transfer all men with sixty to seventy-five points to the 44th Infantry Division at Camp Chaffe, Arkansas. Shortly after V-J Day, September 2, the critical score for enlisted men was lowered to eighty points, and critical

scores were established for offices and warrant officers. Field grade (majors, lieutenant colonels and colonels) with one hundred points were to be eligible for separation, company grade officers (second lieutenants, first lieutenants and captains) were to be eligible with eighty-five points, and the critical score for warrant officers was established at eighty points. Also, Adjusted Service Rating scores (the official term for the point system) were to be recomputed. Heretofore, May 12, 1945, had been the limiting date for computing these scores, but September 2 was now authorized as the limiting date, thus adding, in most cases, five or six points to the scores of 95th Division officers and men.

Late in August, the Division organized what was known as Provisional Detachment "A", a unit which was to train the replacements for all high point men lost by the Division as a result of the separations and transfers. It was planned that this detachment would travel to the Pacific Theater as such, and that its personnel would ultimately be absorbed by the Division's component units as vacancies occurred in those units. Actually, the unit never reached its expected strength of 1,800-odd men, for the Division was to be inactivated before this organization could be completed.

Late the afternoon of September 5, the Commanding General called a meeting of all unit commanders and General and Special Staff officers to announce that the 95th Division was not to go overseas. A telephone message from Headquarters Second Army at Memphis, Tennessee, had informed General Twaddle of the change in plans earlier in the day. In another meeting September 6, the General stated that he had not been told what the Division's new mission was to be. However, it was announced that the shipment of enlisted men with sixty to seventy-five points to the 44th Infantry Division was to be continued, although the Division would hold key administrative personnel. Men with forty-five to sixty points were to be held in the Division until further orders were received (an estimated 5,745 men came in this class), and men with forty-four points or less were to be prepared by the Division to be shipped overseas as replacements. Fifteen schools were to be established immediately to train the men with forty-four points or less.

On September 10, the personnel situation was further cleared with the announcement that enlisted men with forty-nine points or less would be subject to service overseas in the Army of Occupation. The Division was to train these men for such service as long as they remained in the Division. Men with fifty to seventy-nine points were to be employed as instructors, and the training program was changed accordingly. Many more changes were to be made in the Adjusted

Service Rating score system, but the brief discussion here has served to generally explain the situation.

Not until September 22 did the Division learn officially that it was to be inactivated. An Army Ground Forces letter of this date directed the Commanding General of the Second Army to inactivate all component elements of the 95th Infantry Division not later than October 15. The Division Band was excepted, being assigned to the Second Army at Camp Shelby. (However, the band was also inactivated within a month after the Division.) Officers and warrant officers not eligible for separation were to be reassigned within the Second Army. Enlisted men eligible for overseas assignment were to be transferred to the 5th Infantry Division at Camp Campbell, Kentucky, and all remaining enlisted men not eligible for separation were to be transferred to the 28th Infantry Division at Camp Shelby. This latter group was given 45-day furloughs before reporting to the 28th Division.

Although the Division was not officially inactivated until October 15, the inactivation ceremony was held in front of the Division Headquarters buildings at 1000 October 6. Following the playing of the National Anthem by the Division Band, the Commanding General directed "Case your colors". As the band played "Auld Lang Syne", unit executive officers cased their respective colors as the unit commanders faced their colors and saluted.

Before the colors were cased for the last time in the Second World War, General Twaddle addressed his assembled unit commanders, staff officers and a small gathering of civilians, first reading a letter from General Jacob L. Devers, Commanding General of the Army Ground Forces, which follows:

"For their gallant part in breaking the chains of enslaved Europe and defeating the Nazi threat to our own beloved country, the officers and men of the 95th Infantry Division are worthy, indeed, of the nation's gratitude. Their heroism, sacrifice and staunch devotion to duty contributed magnificently to our glorious victory.

"It is deeply significant that the fighting men of the 95th became known as the "Iron Men of Metz" for their brilliant participation in the capture of that fortress city. With equal tenacity and skill, the Division took the important communications center of Boulay and led the mighty Third Army into the Saar by attacking the thickest portion of the Siegfried Line.

"The color and courage of the 95th Division sprung from the months of training and preparation which followed its activation in July, 1942, at Camp Swift, Texas. Maneuvers in Louisiana, California and West Virginia completed the Division's preparation for

the combat which began when the 95th was called into the line 20 October 1944.

"Now, upon the occasion of the 95th Infantry Division's inactivation, it is my privilege to join a grateful America in commending your splendid organization for a job well done. You may be sure that the Division's accomplishments will not be forgotten."

The General then made his last address as commander of the 95th Infantry Division. "Three years and three months ago," he said, "under a blazing Texas sun, the 95th Infantry Division came into being as a combat organization in the Army of the United States.

"On that July day at Camp Swift we knew nothing of what the future held for us. Our country had been at war only a little over seven months. In the Pacific, the Japs were reaching the pinnacle of their power. The Nazi war machine had overrun the larger portion of Europe. Hitler's armies were at the gates of Stalingrad. Rommel's guns could be heard in Cairo. Our own ground, air and service forces were undergoing rapid expansion and intensive training. Industry was devising ways and means to expand production to meet the never-ending demand for munitions.

"Under these inauspicious circumstances the 95th Infantry Division was activated.

"In full appreciation of the fighting abilities of our enemies we went about the huge tasks of organization and training with seriousness and determination. We worked hard. What we learned, we learned well and in time became a well-trained, well-coordinated fighting team backed by efficient supporting service troops.

"The lessons in administration, tactics, supply and evacuation learned at Swift, Bullis, Louisiana, the California Desert and the mountains of West Virginia were translated into worthy achievements at Metz, Saarlautern, in the Rhineland and the Ruhr.

"To the mottoes emblazoned on the organizational standards which stand before us, might well be added those given to the Division by writers here at home who measured carefully our accomplishments on the fields of battle—'The Iron Men of Metz'; 'The Bravest of the Brave'.

"We are proud of those mottoes because we put every ounce of blood, sinew and fighting ability we had into combat in order that operations might be successful. We gained our objectives and accomplished the missions given us; in not one did we fail. We played well our part in gaining final victory.

"And now the circumference of the three and one-quarter-year circle of active service is about to close. Orders of the War Department direct the inactivation of the Division, effective 15 October 1945.



General Twaddle cases the Division colors at the inactivation ceremony, Camp Shelby, Mississippi.

"Several officers and men have already been discharged. Others are being separated daily; still others are being transferred to new assignments or to await discharge.

"To all I wish God Speed and Good Luck. I know that each member of the Victory Division will return to civil life and apply the same devotion and bravery, in helping to solve the problems of peace, which he so nobly applied in helping to bring about the successful termination of the war. This we owe to our brave comrades who did not return.

"I want to thank, personally, each officer and enlisted man of the Division for his loyalty and unselfish devotion to duty.

"To me it has been a great honor to have been granted the privilege of commanding the Division throughout the entire period of its active service during World War II."

PRELUDE TO BATTLE

The initial activation of the 95th Division was begun at Camp Sherman, Ohio, September 5, 1918. The activation order directed the Division's composition to include the following major units: the 189th Infantry Brigade, the 190th Infantry Brigade, the 170th Field Artillery Brigade, the 358th Machine Gun Battalion, the 320th Engineer Battalion, the 620th Field Signal Battalion and the 95th Division Trains. The organization and training of all units except the 320th Engineer Battalion and the 95th Division Trains was fully under way at the time of the Armistice.

Brig. Gen. Mathew C. Smith, commander of the Division during its brief First World War history, received orders early in December, 1918, to demobilize the Division, and this demobilization was completed December 21, all officers and men being discharged or transferred.

From this date to the Division's activation during the Second World War, the unit existed as an organized reserve division with headquarters in Oklahoma City.

The Division's Second World War pre-combat history extended over more than two years of training and travel throughout the breadth of the United States and to include later the United Kingdom and France. Early in its post-activation period, the Division indicated a high degree of personnel-intelligence for Army divisions as the result of Army General Classification Test scores. It was rated equally high in physical fitness tests which were conducted following the completion of basic training. Its performance on three sets of maneuvers, if inconclusive, laid the groundwork for a latent combat efficiency.

The Division's Second World War history can be said to have begun when General Twaddle was named commanding general in March, 1942. Later, Brig. Gen. Robert L. Spragins (afterward a major general commanding the 44th Infantry Division) was named assistant division commander, Brig. Gen. Ward H. Maris was appointed commander of Division Artillery, and Col. Donald W. Brann

(later to become a major general) was named chief of staff.

An enlisted cadre was drawn from the 7th Infantry Division and was trained for organizational duties in June and early July, 1942. A cadre of junior officers was supplied by the various officer candidate schools and the 2nd, 31st, 38th and 43rd Infantry Divisions. The Division was ready to become a part of the Army, and its activation was climaxed by formal ceremonies at newly-constructed Camp Swift, Texas, and by the arrival of filler replacements, July 15.

An early group of inductees from crowded Middlewestern reception centers began drilling immediately after arrival July 10 and were able to stage a review on activation day. As a blazing Texas sun shone down on the assembled Division nucleus and many civilian guests, including Texas' Governor Coke Stevenson, General Twaddle proclaimed his command an active part of the Army of the United States. The Division's component units were activated the same day: the 377th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Col. Francis A. Woolfley; the 378th Regiment, commanded by Col. Allison J. Burnett; the 379th Regiment, lead by Col. Marlin C. Martin; Division Artillery, commanded by General Maris; the 420th Quartermaster Battalion (subsequently reorganized as the 95th Quartermaster Company), the 320th Medical Battalion, the 320th Engineer Battalion, the 95th Reconnaissance Troop, the 95th Signal Company, the 795th Ordnance Company, 95th Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company and the Military Police Platoon.

Upon the arrival of all filler replacements it was found that slightly more than eighty per cent of the Division's enlisted personnel were from the Midwest, the Chicago area predominating. Personnel turnover reduced this figure subsequently, but the Midwest held its majority or plurality throughout the Division's period of activation.

Regular Army, National Guard, Reserve and Selective Service troops all contributed to the Division, with the last named the largest source. Previous to the Division's activation, a provisional Division staff was assembled at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for preliminary training and organization. Regimental, battalion, company and battery commanders had reported to Fort Benning, Georgia, and Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for a one-month training course.

Until August 2, the Division's recruits were broken into the military regiment as individuals, undergoing the customary physical conditioning and indoctrination preliminaries. But on that day a seventeen-week basis training program was launched, aimed at simultaneous training of individuals and small units. The Division's GI's were introduced to a fate that met millions of the nation's new soldiers. There were road marches, they scrambled over obstacle courses, hit

the dirt, learned about first aid and military courtesy, the dual-business end of a rifle—bullet and bayonet; they scanned maps and took azimuths; they hiked patrolled and drilled, both close-order and extended; they heard military sounds-in-the-night and how to muffle them; they matched shelter-halves to pitch their tents, then striking the canvas to roll their packs again; there were calisthenics and squad problems and company problems—all this and much more made up the fast-flying transitional period from rookies to basically trained soldiers and teams.

July 23, 1942, the Division has passed from control of the VIII Corps to direct control of the Third U. S. Army, then commanded by Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger. The change was occasioned by departure of the VIII Corps for maneuvers. When the maneuvering 2nd Infantry Division selected a cadre for the 102nd Infantry Division, a month of further training was necessary before the cadre could join its new division. It was thus transferred to the 95th Division to receive this training.

At Camp Swift the distinctive 9-V insignia was adopted, replacing the original O-K denoting the Division's initially Oklahoma and Kansas constituency. The new insignia was designed by Lt. Col. Leland B. Kuhre, first Second World War commander of the 320th Engineer Battalion, when members of the Division staff were assembled at Fort Leavenworth before activation. It was approved by the War Department in August. In color and design, the insignia was especially appropriate, the red-white-and-blue symbolizing the national character of the Division which represented virtually every state; the Arabic "9" in artillery red, intertwined with a white Roman five of V-for-victory, and both on an elliptical background of infantry blue. From its inception the "victory" theme of the insignia was recognized and largely inspired the Division's nickname, "Victory Division", selected in September, 1943.

The Division's second large group of recruits, mostly from New England and the South, arrived in October. Placed in a provisional training battalion, the newcomers were given a six-week course in basic training. These and subsequent replacement filled in for the men sent to the various officer candidate schools. Up to the time of the Division's overseas movement, the Division contributed 877 men to 19 different officer candidate schools.

"Deep in the heart of Texas", Division troops sought relief from the grind of training with excursions to Austin and other nearby communities. Meanwhile, two Divisional organizations were combining music with soldiering in their daily duties: the bands of the 377th Infantry Regiment and Division Artillery. After establishing com-

mendable reputations for playing at Divisional functions and outside entertainments, the two units were to combine in September, 1943, to form the 95th Division Band. Climaxing the Division's athletic participation at Camp Swift were the Armistice Day track and field competitions and the first Division softball tourney, won by the 377th Infantry Regiment's 3rd Battalion, which defeated the 320th Medical Battalion in the final game.

November 2 was the date of the first review of the entire division, the parade precision being in marked contrast to the irregularities of the recruits' activation review. In the middle of November, morale was stimulated with the announcement that the first furloughs would be forthcoming, beginning November 28. These were deferred when it was announced the Division would move to Fort Sam Houston at San Antonio, Texas.

The seventy miles to historic Fort Sam Houston were negotiated by motor. The famed old Army post proved to be the most ideally situated of any of the Division's stations from the standpoint of its location in the large city of San Antonio, self-styled "winter playground of America". And from a training viewpoint, the outlying Leon Springs Military Reservation offered ideal terrain for many sorts of tactical problems. Its eighteen-mile distance from the main post was turned to the Division's advantage in that it afforded excellent routes for road marches and motor movements. Shortly after the Division was settled at its new station, training at Leon Springs was in full swing. Most units were rotated in cycles which generally allowed two weeks on the reservation, followed by one in garrison. Infantry platoon proficiency tests were conducted, the Division receiving a grade of satisfactory. Meanwhile, the Division's mission for its second phase of training had become perfection of Division Artillery, regimental and separate unit commands into well-coordinated teams in preparation for the third phase, combined unit training. The postponed furloughs began December 14, ten per cent of a command authorized to be absent at one time. Furloughs were to continue until June 1.

A new assistant Division commander, Col. Wilbur C. Dunkelberg, soon to be promoted to brigadier general, was named in December, when General Spragins transferred to another station. Division pride focused on its basketball team, which was all-victorious in the San Antonio Service League and spread the Division's name on a generally-winning circuit of Texas collegiate and amateur opposition. Representing most of the Division's unit's the team never failed to impress a large following with its near-professional prowess. Sergeants Irwin (Bud) Prasse and Durward (Red) Culp enhanced their

already standout college reputations, Prasse an Iowa All-American. The team's final record was twenty-two victories and four defeats. And while the Division cheered its varsity athletes, the men took only a fraction of their sports sitting down. Far from vicarious was the athletic penchant evidenced by physical-fitness performances of all personnel. In these corps-conducted tests, the Division received a superior rating of 91.5. Physical foundations were also being readied for a twenty-five-mile march in eight hours.

Movement to the Leon Springs Military Reservation represented at first a round-trip hike of eighteen miles with full field packs. Later, troops were transported out in trucks, returning to the main post by foot after completing the two-week training stretch. Camp Bullis was the military reservation's base camp. Camps Cibolo, Sheel, Stahl, Panther Springs and Wilderness were built or prepared to accommodate the various units; Cibolo for the infantry, Sheel, Stahl and Panther Springs for the field artillery and Wilderness for the 320th Engineer Battalion and the 320th Medical Battalion. Training included village fighting in mock villages constructed by the engineer battalion. "Branntown" was a North African type village named for the Division's then chief of staff. "Kuhreville", a German type, was named for the first commander of the engineer battalion and the designer of the Division shoulder patch. Troops were introduced to the bangalore torpedo and flame-thrower as training shifted to the assault of fortifications in February. Again, the engineer battalion was called upon to construct the fortification facsimiles which served as the only targets until the Division fought at Metz less than two years later.

A unique Army educational experiment was conducted by the Division in February, a special school for the salvage of manpower. Directed by the Division classification officer, Maj. Julius Mann, the school's purpose was to instruct the Division's non-English-speaking and illiterate personnel in the fundamentals of reading and writing. Many men were reclaimed by the school who might have otherwise been lost. The school was believed to have been the first of its type conducted by a tactical unit.

With the end of February, 1943, came the end of the unit training phase. As the Division turned to combined unit training in March, its members grew increasingly familiar with the sprawling Leon Springs reservation, its ground and its insects, especially the adhesive tick. Life in the field was rugged, and the return to Fort Sam Houston seemed almost to equal a trip home. For one March training specialty, river crossing exercises, the Division was diverted from Leon Springs to the Guadalupe River at Seguin. Here, again, the

Division top utility soldiers, the men of the 320th Engineer Battalion, mainly sponsored the exercises, first demonstrating a crossing and then cooperating with the infantry units in subsequent crossings under simulated tactical conditions. Meanwhile, the combined unit training was predicated largely on regimental combat team exercises, a series of eight being held in accordance with Army Ground Force directives. In march came the first infiltration course exercise. Unanimously, from the commanding general to the newest recruit, the Division squirmed along in lizard-like crawls under the safety-aimed machine gun fire, picking their way through barbed wire from an ever-prone position and snaking past the surprise shocks of limited explosives detonated in the intervals between lanes. A more offensive firing maneuver was made possible with the construction of a close combat course, where troops negotiated difficult terrain while firing progressively at surprise targets that popped up like a jack-in-the-box. The engineers added the infiltration course and the close combat course to their construction accomplishments.

A series of "D" problems through most of May marked the next advance in training, a transition between the practice of training and the application of maneuvers. Involving all units, the "D" problems were the Division's first sham battles and "dummy scrimmages". Umpired by officers of the VIII Corps, the minor maneuvers posed conditions similar to those which were to be experienced in the soon-to-come Louisiana exercises. The Division received a grade of satisfactory on this series of problems.

The tank-and-truck-torn maneuver ground loomed ahead in Louisiana. During the period June 18 through June 24 the Division moved along the Old Spanish Trail by motor and rail to a bivouac area northeast of the village of Many in western Louisiana, near the Sabine River which forms most of the Texas-Louisiana border. A series of four "flag" exercises began June 28 and ended July 7, the purpose of the problems being to afford the division commander additional time to improve the teamwork of the Division before the test of competitive maneuvers. As was to be the case throughout maneuvers, certain special units were attached to the Division. General Twaddle was designated commander of the Red Force during the first phase of the maneuvers. As troops acclimated themselves, it was apparent early that Louisiana weather, terrain and insects would offer more formidable opposition than any of the maneuvering and opposing divisions. Proving ground for most Second World War divisions and lesser units, the Louisiana maneuver area was living up to its reputation as a "grill ground" to test both the tactics and stamina of the Division.

Throughout the whole of the maneuverland, the Division moved in simulated opposition to the 88th and 31st Infantry Divisions and the 11th Armored Division. Besides going through the motions of combat, the Division's troops gained much experience at packing, toting and hiking on the many moves. Problems were generally of three- and four-day duration, split by welcome rest periods. A broad variety of tactical situations were staged between the Red and Sabine Rivers, the latter being crossed by the 95th Division—a training forerunner of what was to come in the European Theater. In the Division's first extensive opportunity to maneuver as a unit, deficiencies were noted against future correction and the experience as a whole was adjudged invaluable. As troops became conditioned to the climate and accustomed to the hurried and frequent moves, the maneuvers became a bit easier. And the physical build-up at Swift and Leon Springs was paying off. Maneuvers ended August 23, 1943, the Division receiving a rating of satisfactory.

The Division was directed to move into Camp Polk, east of the town of Leesville, Louisiana, near which the Division was situated at the end of maneuvers. Pending the movement of an armored division from Camp Polk, Division troops bivouacked north of the camp for nine days, then moving into the camp as incumbent units moved out, closing into the new station September 3, 1943. A six-month training program was projected, with particular emphasis on maps, counter-intelligence and prisoner-of-war procedure, scouting and observing, grenades, minefields, signal security and qualification with arms. A training school for .50-caliber machine-gunners firing at anti-aircraft targets was conducted at Fort Bliss, Texas, the Division sending 472 enlisted men in two increments for training during September and October. At Camp Polk, the Division newspaper, *The Journal*, was increased from half to full tabloid size, semi-monthly. The *Journal* had been instituted during maneuvers. A *Journal*-sponsored contest resulted in the nickname of the Division, "Victory Division". But the Division post-maneuver training was cut short when orders were received to move to the California Desert Training Center, soon to be renamed the California-Arizona Maneuver Area.

The Division began its California-directed movement October 11, preceded by an advance detachment which took over Camp Coxcomb in the California desert from the vacating 77th Infantry Division, then only a year away from its Leyte action that split the Japs' hold on the Philippines. Arriving at the barren slope of Coxcomb near the Colorado River-Los Angeles aqueduct, the Division found itself seventy miles from the nearest town. There were obviously few distractions from training. Coxcomb was a tent city, spread out in

rectagonal unit areas along a stretch of desert grass-studded sand, sloping slightly to the east from the piles of corrugated rock that had been named the Coxcomb Range. Because of its arrival in the fall, the Division escaped the desert-famed heat which is prevalent in that section of California during much of each year.

Thirteen weeks of training were scheduled, beginning November 1. The scope of the desert area was such as to afford the Division its best training ground up to that time. For the first time, the Division could use live ammunition in most of its training problems. Bangalore torpedoes boomed through the nights as troops learned to blast gaps in field obstructions, while many other phases of field work were covered in the "swing shift" training periods. Close battle conditions were simulated with considerable realism during artillery rolling barrage demonstrations, when infantry troops were progressively deployed 150 yards behind the artillery barrage and light aerial bombardment.

Although remote from municipalities, the Division instituted a pass policy which brought Los Angeles, the film colony, Palm Springs and other Southern California points of interest within range. A prolonged stay in the Palm Springs and Hollywood areas was the fortunate lot of Capt. Savidge's Company C 377th Infantry Regiment, selected to act in training films pointly produced by Universal Pictures and the U. S. Army Signal Corps. Company C had previously acted in a short motion picture designed to popularize the infantry. The second movie venture was destined to occupy the company from Jan. 8 to March 20, 1944.

While the Division trained in the California desert, The Journal was increased in size to a six-page semi-monthly, an eight-page edition being published February 3, 1944; Miss Virginia Ference of Maple Heights, Ohio, was named "Miss Victory Division" in a Journal-sponsored contest; T/Sgt. M. George Vanicek wrote the winning entry in a Journal-conducted Division song-writing contest. Vanicek's song, "The 95th Marches On", was later published and copyrighted. "Prelude", a forty-page pictorial training history of the Division, was distributed to troops early in February. More than 23,000 copies of the book were sold, representing the largest sale of such a book in any division. Late in December, 1943, General Dunkelberg left the Division for a new assignment in the Aleutians, being replaced as assistant Division commander by Brig. Gen. Don C. Faith, former commander of the Women's Army Corps.

Division field exercises were held from December 28, 1943, to January 4, 1944. January 10 the Division was deployed for the "Battle of Palen Pass," key problem in desert maneuvers that were to extend

to January 30. The 11th Armored Division, a Louisiana associate and "foe", opposed the Division. Upon the completion of these desert maneuvers, the Division was directed to move to the Indiantown Gap Military Reservation, Pennsylvania.

The advance party arrived at Indiantown Gap February 12, with the entire Division closing into the new station February 25. Having boarded trains in California's temperate winter climate, Division troops were not altogether prepared for the sub-zero weather that met them when they detrained in Pennsylvania. The weather couldn't chill the troops' enthusiasm for their new station, however, with the easy accessibility to several metropolitan areas (New York, Philadelphia, Washington, Baltimore) probably Indiantown Gap's leading virtue in their eyes.

Outstanding in the Division's latest training program was the series of exercises conducted in the West Virginia Maneuver Area. Combat teams were rotated to the area near Elkins, West Virginia, where mountain climbing, assault climbing and a pack school were on the training agenda. Besides combat teams, parts of all special troops units went through the mountain climbing exercises, while selected personnel attended the pack and assault schools. The pack schools afforded the Division's mule-skinner a chance at their trade. Seneca Rock offered a 928-foot climb or descent to the cliff scalers who hung Tarzan-like by their nylon ropes. "Rappels", "traverses" and "chimneys", among other terms, were added to the GI vernacular. The West Virginia training was generally regarded by veteran officers and enlisted men as the most rigorous single phase of training undertaken by the 95th Division.

The influx of new men was heavy at Indiantown Gap. The Division received 4000 troops from the drastically curtailed Army Specialized Training Program, half of this number being sent later to other units. Besides this total, 2,190 other enlisted men were added to the Division's rolls at its Pennsylvania station.

Late in March the 95th Division Artillery received a commendation for having attained the highest division artillery score in Army Ground Force battalion firing tests since the inauguration of a new form of tests in November, 1943. Also in March, the Division newspaper made another advance, The Journal becoming a six-page weekly. A few weeks earlier, The Journal became a four-page weekly, marking an advance over the newspaper's previous history when it had been an every-other-week publication.

April 1, Undersecretary of War Robert P. Patterson (later Secretary) visited the Division on an inspection tour which lasted most of the day. In Mr. Patterson's party were Representatives John M.

Costello (Democrat, California), E. P. Scrivner (Republican, Kansas) and John J. Sparkman (Democrat, Alabama). After witnessing a cross-section of troops in their various training exercises, Mr. Patterson and his party reviewed the entire Division in a steady rain. To newspaper reporters present at the time, Mr. Patterson said, in part, "I was greatly impressed by the training of (95th Division) troops. I am sure that dispatches from the battlefield will recall the 95th Division to my mind with the greatest pride." That rainy-day statement was to be fulfilled eight months later.

Late in April the Division's first boxing tournament on a team basis saw the 378th Infantry Regiment win the Class I (experienced) title and the 377th Infantry Regiment win the Class II (novice) trophy. Also late in April, The Journal jumped to an eight-page weekly, thus ranking among the largest divisional newspapers.

In early May, 1944, another change in the Division's command replaced General Maris, who moved up to the command of a corp artillery, as Division Artillery commander with Colonel Mark McClure. Colonel McClure had been Division G-3 at the time of the Division's activation. Three occasions in May and June put the 95th Division on display for the nearby and visiting public. A Mothers Day observance honored the mothers of seven Division men, drawn by lot from the seven major units. The mothers were guests of the Division for a three-day program which was featured by a radio broadcast and a review of the 379th Infantry Regiment. Sunday, May 28, the Division and the post were host to the governors of 37 states and the Virgin Islands, plus other nationally prominent politicians, who were attending the thirty-sixth annual Governors Conference held in nearby Hershey. Combat Team Seven was reviewed by the governors, who also witnessed a display of military equipment. **June 15** was marked by the most spectacular demonstration of the fundamentals of foot-soldiering ever staged by the Division. More than six thousand visitors beheld a four-hour exhibition as the Division's part in the first national observance of Infantry Day.

June and most of July found the 95th Division trending unmistakably toward an overseas movement. Personnel and equipment received equal attention. Speculation ended a few days before June 25, when an advance party left Indiantown Gap and sailed for the European Theater of Operations June 29. The Division was on its way to battle, and most troops enjoyed their remaining respites in Pennsylvania and surrounding states. Units began moving to the staging area at Camp Myles Standish, Massachusetts, July 18, two trains daily, and all units had closed in by July 27.

Loud speakers warned troops as soon as they detrained that they

were "now in a secret area." In the two weeks that followed, processing of clothing and equipment followed. A full round of lectures occupied all hands as they were advised about ship security, abandoning-ship, censorship, finance, sanitation, conduct overseas and other pertinent subjects (including "gangplank fever"). Physical fitness was maintained through road marches, obstacle course-running, and athletic contests. Boston became the latest metropolitan mecca for the Division, but it wasn't long before the restriction lid was clamped down and the big ships tied up. The ultimate rail movement of thirty-five miles to the Boston Port of Embarkation was negotiated, trains running conveniently onto the dock. Traditional Red Cross doughnuts, coffee and orangeade helped calm any stomachs that might have quaked at the gangplank's forbidding slope. Troops were squared off according to number and then began the fateful file of pack-and-bag-laden men up the plank, responding with first names and initials to the check-off of surnames. The U. S. S. Mariposa sailed August 6, with the 378th Infantry, 358th, 359th, 360th, Field Artillery Battalions and the 320th Medical Battalion aboard. The U. S. S. West Point (formerly America) embarked August 9 with all remaining units of the Division. Prior to sailing, troops "came up for air" on the sun deck, looking long at the Boston waterfront and getting in their last whistles at American girls. As the ships wound out through the anti-submarine-netted harbor, the last visual contact with the United States faded out with the dimming lights of the city and Massachusetts' North Shore. The voyages were generally serene and the Division enjoyed, save for unavoidable overcrowding, the shipboard life so novel to most everyone. Motion pictures, standing in lines at the ship's stores and reading occupied most of the troops' time. With the ships taking about the same time to cross, they docked at Liverpool August 14 and 17, respectively. Thus, these dates became highly significant in the Division's history. They marked the first arrival of the division on any foreign soil in any war. For a probable majority of the Division's personnel, Liverpool's docks represented their first foreign footing. Staggering under maximum loads, troops made their way up a long ramp and to the waiting English trains with their European-mode cars. Traveling southeasterly through the Midlands, all eyes peered and necks craned at the alternating rustic and industrial vistas that were framed by thick green hills. The Division's destination was Winchester, in Hampshire, oldest English city, capital during King Alfred's reign and legendarily synonymous with King Arthur's Camelot. The advance party had set up headquarters in and around the historic city. The advance party had been at its busiest in drawing the Division's vehicles from

various pools. The 378th Infantry, minus the 1st and 3rd Battalions, Division Headquarters and Headquarters Special Troops, 320th Medical Battalion, 95th Quartermaster Company and 95th Signal Company were quartered in Winchester. The 377th Infantry, 379th Infantry, Division Artillery, 795th Ordnance Company and 95th Reconnaissance Troop were located at Barton Stacey Camp, about twelve miles northwest of Winchester. The balance of the 378th Infantry was scattered in quaintly named localities east and northeast of Winchester: Armsworth House Camp, Brighton Wood Camp, Bishop's Sutton Camp, New Alresford, Tichborne Park and Cheriton. The 320th Engineer Battalion was located at Northwood Park, about three miles northwest of Winchester. Under the Ninth U. S. Army, which was soon to be operating in Brittany, the Division staged its final preparations for commitment on the Continent. Administrative matters plus drawing of additional clothing and equipment held priority over training, although several specialized courses were held in such subjects as camouflage, passive air defense, bomb reconnaissance, mines and booby traps, order of battle and pre-capture—all pertinent to the Division's immediate combat future.

By September 1, the Division had received certain attachments, most of which joined the G-2 Section for the purpose of expanding the Division's intelligence facilities. These specialists included a Photo Interpretation team, a Military Intelligence team, two Interrogation-of-Prisoners-of-War teams and an Order of Battle team. Also added to Division Headquarters were a G-5 Section (Civil Affairs) and an Air Support Party, which was attached to the G-3 Section. Although the Division hurried through its stay in Hampshire, there was time enough for all personnel to get acquainted with the English countryside and the cities, the latter generally from a pub's perspective. Trading in pence, shillings, half-crowns and pounds, troops set aside their chilled-beer preference and downed warm mild-and-bitters. From August 30 through midnight September 7, passes were authorized for officers and enlisted men to visit London and other points.

Sunday, September 3, General Twaddle took a prominent part in Winchester's Fifth War Anniversary program, the day being commemorated throughout the United Kingdom. The General attended services in the Winchester Cathedral, England's longest and one of its oldest. He inspected a guard of honor, composed of British Home Guard personnel, and entered the cathedral, where a representative group of the Division were also in attendance. The group included twenty-five officers and seventy-five enlisted men of the 2nd Battalion 378th Infantry. Approximately twenty-four hundred persons attended the services. Following the services, the General and his

party moved to the Guild Hall where he inspected a second guard of honor, also British Home Guard, and then took a review of various British Civilian Service elements and the Division's representatives. Addressing a crowd of four thousand following the review, General Twaddle said in conclusion, "We know that it is only through the mutual effort of all the United Nations that final victory can be won, and we know that we have established a pattern of cooperation that will serve us well in the difficult days that will follow. But we cannot forget that only the fighting heart of a single nation stood between the Axis victory in 1940, that it was your unfaltering will to survive as free men that gained the time we needed to mount the battles we are winning today. In these five years you have proved yourselves worthy of your great heritage—a heritage we Americans are proud to share." These words rang the more truly in light of the evidence of the blitz which 95th men found still apparent in London and the more current buzz bombs, warnings of which forced retreats to underground shelters.

The last leg of the Division's trek to the ground-operational sectors of the European Theater was begun September 8. From that date through September 11 troops trucked to Southampton, great Channel port twelve miles south of Winchester, or to Weymouth, about forty miles southwest of Southampton. As a criterion of the task ahead, they carried live ammunition. Units moved in the general order of Combat Teams Seven, Eight and Nine, special troops being intermingled. All artillery units, the 795th Ordnance Company and the 95th Reconnaissance Troop embarked from Weymouth, the remainder leaving from Southampton. First indication of Southampton's importance as a bombing target were the silvery barrage balloons swinging high on cables around the harbor. Signs of the blitz were still there, though sufficient time had elapsed to allow nearly full repair of the dock area. The Division, with all its vehicles, boarded Liberty ships, LST's and converted British commercial vessels. Passage across the English Channel was delayed two and three days for most units as, following embarkation, it was necessary to lay both in and outside the harbor pending availability of debarkation facilities at the landing point. Southampton ships anchored in the Solent, off the inner shore of the Isle of Wight just outside Southampton's bay. While portable radios carried the news that the Ninth Army was then in the field in France, troops steadily dieted on C-Rations and

waited for their "show to get on the road." By September 14, however, the last of the boats had gotten underway—in convoy, the Division's first travel in a train of ships. Late that afternoon the tail ends of the convoy arrived off the Normandy coast, sailed past Cherbourg and anchored with their predecessors near Omaha Beach to await debarkation the next morning.

APPENDIX I

The following is a list of 95th Infantry Division men who received battlefield commissions as second lieutenants in the Division during the Second World War. This was one of the Army's highest combat honors.

377TH INFANTRY

Raymond J. Albano, Small, Idaho; Lemuel G. Tilson, Arkansas City, Kan.; Curtis E. White, Detroit, Mich.; Ernest H. Reich, Cisco, Texas; Stanley R. Vraga, Racine, Wis.; Andrew Skrele, Springfield, Ill.; Walter H. Soroka, Detroit, Mich.; Leo A. Moreau, Glenwood, Minn.; Donald T. O'Brien, Springfield, Ohio; Joseph F. Kupiec, Chicago, Ill.; Clarence A. Konopacki, Manitowoc, Wis.; Glen R. Beecraft, Huntsville, Ill.; William R. Johnson, Port Arthur, Texas; Alvin T. Tyner, Randolph, Iowa; Jack D. O'Dell, Kingman, Kan.; Michael J. Petrus, Westville, Ill.; Alexander M. Hunter, Springfield, Mass.; Robert J. Hammell, Tulot, Ark.; Ralph F. Willard, Green Bay, Wis.; Glen E. Hemphill, Milford, Iowa; Arthur Snyder Jr., Garden City, L. I.; John A. Hein, Chicago, Ill.; Charles Ridge, Monterey, Calif.; Burdette Michael, Chicago, Ill.; Myron R. Bates, River Rouge, Mich.; Francis J. Louchs, Hollydale, Calif.; Joseph W. Grell, Pierz, Minn.; and Claude C. Bugg Jr., Clinton, Ky.

378TH INFANTRY

Delbert O. McManomy, Hillsboro, Ind.; Tea Garland, Arcadia, Calif.; Ralph R. Alcocer, Los Angeles, Calif.; Rudolph E. Fracisco, Albany, Calif.; Robert D. Hecker, Fairfax, Mo.; Alfred L. Darnell Jr., Falls City, Neb.; Elroy J. Rautmann, Sheboygan, Wis.; Carl L. Betker, Laona, Wis.; Edward J. Jones, Napa, Calif.; William Pin, San Mateo, Calif.; George E. Arrowood, Bryant, Wis.; David C. Cannon, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Jack V. Kirkham, Roseburg, Ore.; John Herrick, Chicago, Ill.; Mason D. Vanderheyden, Stockton, Ill.; David C. Howe, Savannah, Ga.; Robert C. Lahrman, Lafayette, Ind.; Robert M. Hamblly, Plymouth, Ill.; Leonard W. Moersch, Elkhart Lake, Wis.; Elmer L. Scheffler, St. Marys, Ohio; and John W. Page, Massillon, Ohio.

379TH INFANTRY

John W. Michael Jr., River Forest, Ill.; Raymond B. Smelser, Red Cloud, Neb.; Arthur G. Thompson, Augusta, Kan.; Douglas B. Munro, Grosse Point, Mich.; John J. Hamrock, Campbell, Ohio; Harry D. Sebring, Ackley, Iowa; Walter J. Pustelnik (Killed in Action), Chicago, Ill.; K. D. Johnston, Schulenburg, Texas; George L. Matunich, Akron, Ohio; Max E. Stambach, Meadville, Mo.; Douglas

F. Jones, Canton, Ohio; Raymond M. Brown, Olpe, Kan.; James K. Broderick, Tucson, Ariz.; Francis A. Steichen, St. Cloud, Minn.; Peter P. Velasquez, San Antonio, Texas; Bruce W. Melzer, Bad Axe, Mich.; Jerome R. Gibbons, Chicago, Ill.; John V. LaCrosse Jr., Kenosha, Wis.; Elvis A. Mason, Oakland City, Ind.; Walter H. Dresing Jr., Lakewood, Ohio; Warren P. Blumberg, Long Island City, N. Y.; Harold Dennison, Smithfield, W. Va.; and W. F. Lynn, Lyman, S. C.

320TH ENGINEER BATTALION

Robert W. Odell, Oakland, Calif.

920TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Arthur Metzger, Jamaica, N. Y.

378TH MEDICAL DETACHMENT

Charles L. Love, Houston, Texas.

APPENDIX II

The following officers and men of the 95th Infantry Division were awarded the Medal of Honor and the Distinguished Service Cross.

MEDAL OF HONOR

Staff Sergeant Andrew Miller

Company G 377th Infantry Regiment

Killed In Action

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS

377TH INFANTRY

Lt. Col. Robert L. Walton; Capt. Herbert H. Hardy; Capt. Samuel T. Pinckney; 2d Lt. Lemuel G. Tilson; T/Sgt. Paul C. Powers; S/Sgt. Frederick M. Peterson; S/Sgt. Donald N. Radtke; S/Sgt. Robert E. Roberts; S/Sgt. Earl F. Thurston; T/5 Edward J. Stepanik; Pvt. Willie H. Bishop; Pvt. Ralph Morgan Rothermel.

378TH INFANTRY

Lt. Col. John E. Kelley; Lt. Col. Autrey J. Maroun; and Pfc Walter Low.

379TH INFANTRY

Lt. Col. Tobias R. Philbin; 1st Lt. William F. Eberle; 1st Lt. Edward D. Eldridge; 2d Lt. Raymond B. Emelzer; T/Sgt. Rudolph M. Schuller and S/Sgt. Elmer A. Eggert.

APPENDIX III

The following is a list of 95th Division Command Posts during the Division's overseas service during World War II. The list is classified by date, city or town, province and country.

August 17, 1944; Winchester, Hampshire, England; September 15, 1944; Mandeville, Calvados, France; October 13, 1944; Norroy-le-Sec, Marne and Moselle, France; October 20, 1944; Villers-sous-Preny, Marne and Moselle, France; November 1, 1944; Moyeuivre Grande, Moselle, France; November 24, 1944; Borny, Marne and Moselle, France; November 28, 1944; Boulay, Moselle, France; January 28, 1945; Tavigny, Luxembourg, Belgium; February 5, 1945; Roclenge-sur-Geer, Limbourg, Belgium; February 15, 1945; Duerne, Limburg, Holland; February 22, 1945; Roclenge-sur-Geer, Limbourg, Belgium; March 2, 1945; Juelich, Rhineland, Germany; March 3, 1945; Osterath, Rhineland, Germany; March 5, 1945; Krefeld, Rhineland, Germany; March 11, 1945; Ameln, Rhineland, Germany; April 2, 1945; Beckum, Westfalen, Germany; April 9, 1945; Soest, Westfalen, Germany; April 11, 1945; Werl, Westfalen, Germany; April 12, 1945; Kamen, Westfalen, Germany; April 19, 1945; Beckum, Westfalen, Germany; April 23, 1945; Erwitte, Westfalen, Germany; May 9, 1945; Luedinghausen, Westfalen, Germany; and June 16, 1945; Camp Old Gold, Normandy, France.

APPENDIX IV

The Organization of an Infantry Division

The following remarks are intended merely to aid a non-military reader in following the text; those who wish a more precise or exhaustive account are referred to military manuals.

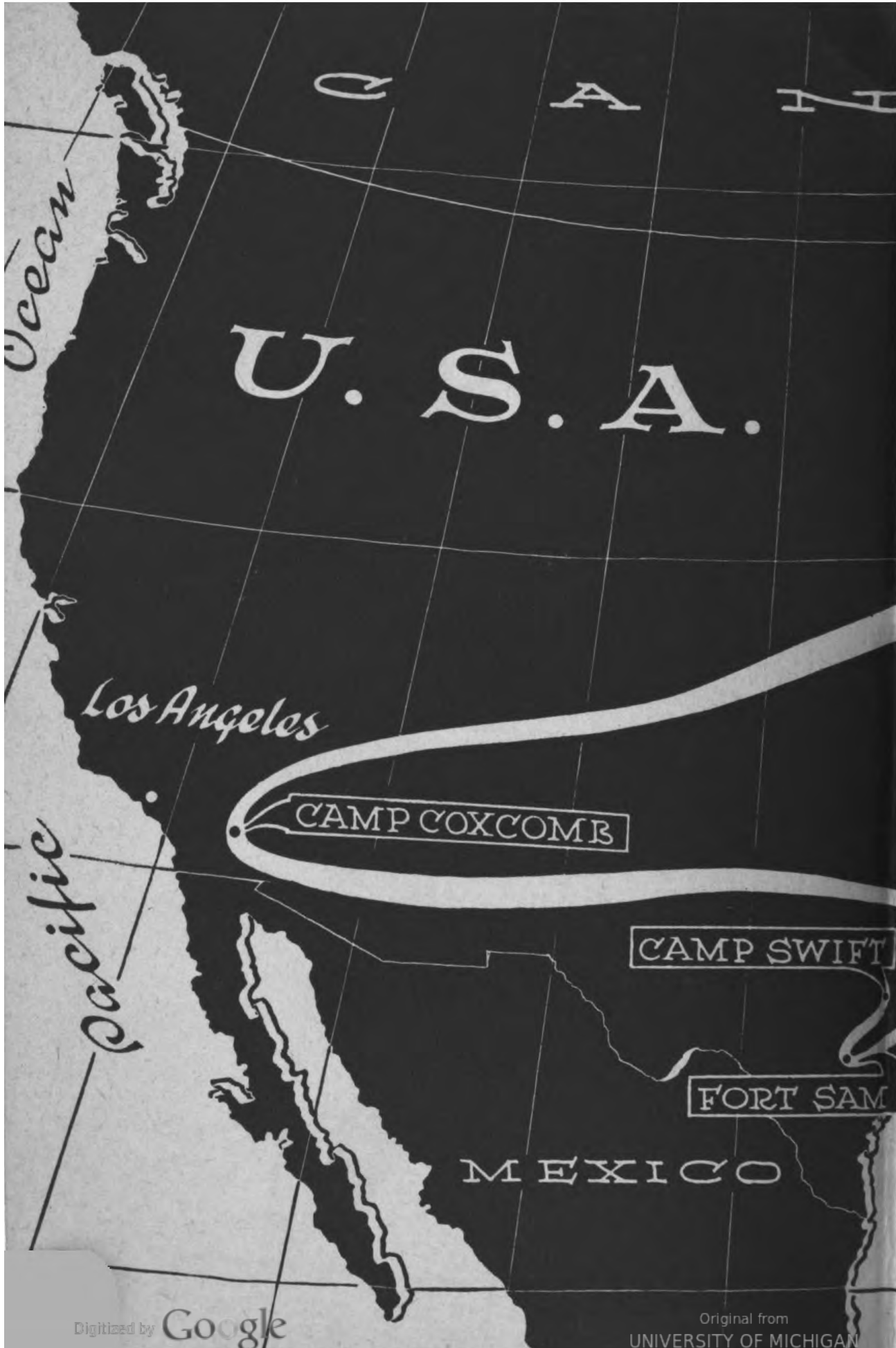
An infantry division contains approximately 14,000 officers and men. Of the units which comprise a division, the infantry regiments figure most prominently in the battle story. The Division contains three regiments, the 377th, the 378th, and the 379th Infantry Regiments, and each regiment contains approximately 3,000 men. In each regiment there is a regimental headquarters company, a cannon company, an antitank company, and a service company in addition to three infantry battalions of approximately 850 men each. An infantry battalion contains a battalion headquarters company, three rifle companies, and a heavy weapons company. In all regiments the naming of the companies is the same. The 1st Battalion contains the 1st Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company, rifle companies A, B and C and heavy weapons company D; the 2nd Battalion contains the 2nd Battalion Headquarters Company, rifle companies

E, F and G; and heavy weapons company H; and the 3rd Battalion contains the 3rd Battalion Headquarters Company, rifle companies I, K and L, and heavy weapons company M.

In addition to the three regiments the Division contains four battalions of Field Artillery (there are three light battalions, the 920th, 358th, and 359th Field Artillery Battalions and one medium battalion, the 360th Field Artillery Battalion), the 320th Engineer (Combat) Battalion, the 320th Medical Battalion, the 95th Signal Company, the 95th Quartermaster Company, the 795th Ordnance Company, and Headquarters and Headquarters Company 95th Infantry Division.

The Division may also be broken down into combat teams which consist of an infantry regiment with its normal attachments. Combat Team 7 includes the 377th Infantry Regiment, the 920th Field Artillery Battalion, Company A 320th Engineers, and Company A 320th Medical Battalion; Combat Team 8 included the 378th Infantry Regiment, the 358th Field Artillery Battalion, Company B 320th Engineer Battalion, and Company B 320th Medical Battalion; and Combat Team 9 included the 379th Infantry Regiment, 359th Field Artillery Battalion, Company C 320th Engineer Battalion, and Company C 320th Medical Battalion.

A division in combat normally has certain other units attached to it and under its direct control. The 547th AAA Battalion was attached to the 95th Division throughout the Division's combat history, and in addition at least one battalion of tank destroyers and one battalion of tanks were usually attached. Special units might be attached briefly for special missions. Finally a number of units such as Corps artillery and engineer units are normally placed in support of the Division although not under direct division control.



U. S. A.

Los Angeles

CAMP COXCOMB

CAMP SWIFT

FORT SAM

MEXICO

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



3 9015 04979 4616

A

D

Chicago

Boston
New York

CAMP
MILES
STANDISH

INDIANTON
GAP

WEST VIRGINIA
MANEUVER AREA

Mississippi

CAMP SHELBY

CAMP POLK

HOUSTON

Gulf of Mexico

Atlantic Ocean

